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Refusing To Be Buried Alive:

Burial and African Immigration in Afro-Hispanic Literature

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Refusing To Be Buried Alive:

Burial and African Immigration in Afro-Hispanic Literature

by

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By

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In this study, I analyze the imagery and semantics of burial in prose and poetry as written by African authors who compose in Castilian Spanish. The examination will be of interment in four literary works: *El diablo de Yudis* (1994), by Ahmed Daoudi; *Desde la otra orilla* (2004), by Abderrahman El Fathi; *El metro* (2007), by Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo; and *El motín del silencio* (2006), by Mohamed Bouissef Rekab Luque. I explore how burial is conceived discursively and spatially in a manner that questions rigid, Eurocentric concepts of identity and modernity, thus challenging the rise of xenophobia in Spain since the passing of the Foreigner's Act. I look at how the role of burial as a space and semantic signifier facilitates a fresh understanding of African subjects as agents who rise above their sociopolitical milieu, taking the initiative to change their sociopolitical leverage toward obtaining and achieving cultural and social autonomy for themselves and for their families. Employing a theoretical analysis that includes Walter Mignolo's *border gnosis*, Judith Butler's *passionate attachments*, Néstor García Canclini's understanding of modernity, Kathleen Brogan's approach to burial, and Cathy Caruth's writings on trauma, the study delves into the consequences and

implications of freedom and agency in the aftermath of colonial violence and human degradation.

These theoretical approaches allow for the negotiation of an autonomous identity that challenges traditional ideas of borders, geographical territorialities, and the porousness of bodies both personal and geopolitical. With sustained critical study, the analysis points to different solutions to stepping outside of colonial narrative, affirming the life of humans whose lives, usually subaltern, are often considered not worthy of grieving. Simultaneously, the study's intent is to also de-center hegemonic systems of control and information, usually Western and Eurocentric, that threaten to make communal living between Africa and the rest of the globe an impossibility. By examining the authors' intent in choosing to include burial scenes in their novels, the idea is to open up burial as a strategic literary device, space, and trope that can make achieving equality an attainable working goal, locally and globally.

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Introduction

Burial, while often synonymous with death, need not be final. It does not have to mean the end of a trajectory *per se*. Rather, burial can be a semantic and metaphorical threshold marking the potential for retrieving and crossing back in time or in space in order to increase one's sense of agency and control over the course of a life. It is no wonder, then, that the four works that I address in my investigation - *El metro*, by Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo (2007), *Desde la otra orilla*, by Abderrahman El Fathi (2004), *El motin del silencio* (2006) by Mohamed Bouissef Rekab Luque, and *El diablo de Yudis,* by Ahmed Daoudi (1994) – all address, *via* the imagery and semantics of burial, the contemporary thematics of migration from Africa to Europe. It is as if, for these authors, burial were a signifier of a threshold to be transgressed, and also as a space for retrieval of identity and agency in a postcolonial reality where the West (Europe and the United States) has almost total social, economic, and political hegemony. One of the ways by which these western sociopolitical geographies have been able to successfully impose their designs of control has been through the unique mobilization of cultural racism, or differentialist racism, during the late 1980s and into the early 2000s. This non-biological form of discrimination, positing that different blocks of ethnic subjectivities would not be able to get along or adapt to European or Western standards simply because they were culturally indisposed for doing so. As Bernabé López García observed in 2002:

> Lo que aparece como nuevo, aunque sus primeras manifestaciones
> las hayamos visto desde hace ya al menos cinco años, va a ser la
> aparición de un discurso, avalado por algunos intelectuales

> orgánicos vinculados al poder, […] partidario de filtrar a los inmigrantes en función de su procedencia geográfica pretextando razones culturales o religiosas que justificarían una mayor integrabilidad de determinados colectivos frente a otros. Concretamente los latinoamericanos frente a los magrebíes o africanos, los cristianos frente a los musulmanes, los hispanoparlantes frente a los hablantes de otras lenguas. (132-133)

Other researchers studying Europe's growing multicultural and pluralistic realities have also reaffirmed the phenomenon of cultural racism (Daniela Flesler 2004; Étienne Balibar & Immanuel Wallerstein 1991). This discourse, which López García (above) has referred to as an "ethnic filter" discourse, has served to fortify Spanish anti-immigrant legislation such as the 1985 Foreigner's Law (*Ley de extranjería*). The discourse itself is dependent on the assumption that identitarian labels are entirely true, that is, on the assumption that minority groups of people are all alike, and that no individual differences exist within communities that deviate from the normative Hispano-Christian identity that is white and European. I argue that this "ethnic filter" discourse been the central strategy to bury entire communities and to disempower them from having control over their lives and say in a supposedly democratic Spain. Ironically and insultingly enough, the "ethnic filter" discourse is itself reliant upon perpetuating the idea that Spaniards themselves are a monolithic community and that any incoming migrant is a threat to contaminating the civilized order and therefore is a potential destabilizer to Spanish harmony and wellbeing. From the perspective that entire groups have unjustly been painted with a broad and

generalizing "brush," the imagery of burial serves to relay the idea that stereotypes can be transgressed by acting as a threshold that can be crossed at will, in order to retrieve new understandings of identity, and of challenging oppressive systems of governance and surveillance. Burial, from this particular context, can be both an interstitial and liminal space and practice from which to retrieve and re-interpret a past that up until the 21st century and even today has served to keep entire religious, ethnic, class, and racial groups in continued subservience in the most clever and insidious fashions. In her 1998 study on death, trauma, and burial in U.S. literature entitled *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature* (1998), Kathleen Brogan approaches the idea of burial in relation to trauma and retrieval in a particularly relevant chapter entitled "Getting Back One's Dead for Burial: Traumatic History and Ritual Reburial in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." Herein lies the potential of the deathly metaphor- burial can serve as an ambivalent space from which one can ambiguously decide to bury subjection and modern slavery and, choose to fight for autonomy and the freedom to move across national and geopolitical boundaries for an improved livelihood.

Brogan, originally writing about Morrison's 1987 novel *Beloved* (1987), observes that: "Haunting […] signals the return of a past that can neither be properly remembered nor entirely forgotten" (63). To overcome the debilitating effects of history and of colonial trauma, then, it is, according to Brogan, important "to retrieve…the minute and now forgotten details" (63) of a painful history. Brogan's work is important because it explores the potential for the retrieval of past events and using storytelling to overcome the paralysis and oppressiveness of years (centuries, even) of subaltern and marginalized

experiences. Thus burial, while normally associated with death and therefore seen as deterministic, teleological and negative, can also be understood as a framework for psychological resistance and even as an articulation of active movement to effect historical change. Subjectivities are enabled to free themselves from the teleological narratives that allow for the prevalence and the debilitating effects of cultural racism and its sinister ability to create an imagery where people are only their religious and ethnic history and nothing more. Conscious of the damaging impact of Eurocentric literatures that fabricate the image of helpless and dependent African peoples, the four authors in this academic study use the imagery of burial as a strategic space and practice to cross any and all borders so as to retrieve the tools of memory and knowledges in order to destroy what keeps them down and trapped in categorical boxes of synthetic and man-made memory, history, and colonial designs.

Brogan's analysis of *Beloved* is also significant because it approaches colonial history from a perspective of social deconstruction and postcolonial challenge to hegemonic historicity. Her reading *vis-à-vis* the imagery of burial enables an understanding of colonial oppression that uses a person's body as a text for its own ethnocentric and violent histories, justifying exclusion and liminality at the same time. By approaching trauma through the locus of burial, Brogan's analysis can enable a certain understanding of recovering sense of identity and personhood. The mind becomes a map-able geography for reversing the trails of colonial greed and enterprise, enabling new possible trails of imaginative creativity, comparatively more free from coloniality than ever before. The title of my investigation, *Refusing To Be Buried Alive: Burial and*

African Immigration in Afro-Hispanic Literature, is inspired conceptually in Brogan's idea of the mind's capacity to retrieve aspects from the past, or to retrieve ideas, ideologies, and images from across the borders as another way of refusing to be buried alive. That is, there is no definitive threshold across which African migrants are not willing to fight for the access to retrieve ideas, memories, and opportunities, and as such, the characters in the works that I study refuse summarily to be buried by bureaucracies, red tape, geographical borders, racism, hatred, and political bullying as well as economic gentrification, and instead they find ways to negotiate and maneuver their path both to and through Europe. Framed between the interstices of life and death, burial alone can become a border space, liminally marking the frontiers between the dead and the living. But as an interstitial space, burial does not only have to comment upon the relation between the physically dead and physically living, but also on the line that separates the psychologically *muertos* and the psychologically *vivos*.

In this study, the subject of burial will be studied and analyzed with relation to Spanish-language literary production by African authors, including those from North Africa as well as from Sub-Saharan Africa. By burial I am referring in particular to its connotations with the physical loss of life and with the subsequent use of space to facilitate and acknowledge death as a grievable event. I draw from Brogan's exploration of death and its ties to coloniality and trauma, where history can be read as a framework from which one can excavate the past. Brogan's ideas on burial have important Trans-atlantic implications for migration studies between Africa and Spain, because they enable an understanding of burial as an action and a space that is tied to death, and where

retrieval of memory and identity can also occur. Burial can be a traumatized space and action related to death, but it does not have to be. It can also be a space-action dialectic whereby trauma is dislodged, and overcome.

Let us take Brogan's postcolonial analysis of burial in the U.S. and take it across the Atlantic in order to look at what is being buried in continental Europe. Spain's particular historical effort to cut off any ties or links to its geographic neighbor is especially evident now when one considers the nature of the contemporary migration debate in Spain, as well as Spanish attitudes towards Africans and African cultures. Semantically, emotionally, socially, and politically, the Iberian Peninsula has attempted over the past five hundred years to bury its shared living history with its southern neighbor.[1] Post-Francoist Spain has systematically assured the continuity of this slight in small ways and sometimes in much more visible ways. Two newspaper articles that came out in 2014 can serve as recent examples to illustrate the subtle and overt ways in which Spain, and Europe in general, discriminate against Africa, burying their ties to the region. While the country chooses to separate itself from much of what it shares with its neighboring landmass, what perhaps is most worth noting is how there seems to be a huge preoccupation not with excluding Africa for its own sake, but rather interring any sign of shared mutual influence between the two cultures. In the context of the

[1] The threat of the Medieval Moor is considered nil, and therefore is considered as properly sanitary for orthodox Spanish historiography, and therefore is highlighted in a way that strongly contrasts with the treatment of modern-day North African subjects who come to Spain. Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2003) tackle this distinction in their article on the celebration of *Moros y Cristianos* festivals in the Spanish Levant. Accordingly, the only Moorish history worthy of celebration is that of the distant Moor, defeated by the Spanish in Early Modern times. The Moor *de antaño* is safe because s/he represents a history that is situated in the distant past, whereas the migrant is considered in the media to be a threat because of the migration that is happening concurrently.

contemporary Hispano-Moroccan relationship, burial comes to signify a locus full of forgettable and insignificant people, thereby diminishing North African human subjectivity and dignity in the process. On 3 June 2014, *El País* published an article titled "El 'hermano mayor' de Mohamed VI" in which it romanticized the paternalistic but positive relationship that Spain had with Morocco, exploiting the idea that Spain and Morocco could be understood as blood brothers in a recycling of what some critics have called *Hispanotropicalism.*[2] The article conveys the subtle message that if Spain is the bigger brother, then it is Morocco that is the inferior and slightly helpless little brother, constantly in need of support and financial assistance from the Peninsula. In the old photo that accompanies the article, an altruistic and fatherly King Juan Carlos I wipes back tears with a handkerchief while sitting next to a saddened monarch Mohamed VI. There is an uncomfortably odd sense in the picture and in the article that Juan Carlos will step in as a surrogate father figure, as the photo was taken at the funeral of the deceased King Hassan II fifteen years earlier[3]. This condescending imagery creates a dynamic of role-playing where Spanish citizens become accustomed to seeing Spain with the upper hand in terms of power, and this reinforces the idea that naturalizes the Peninsula as a space and as a culture that is superior to North Africa.

In another article, this time published on 1 February 2014 in *The New York Times*, Malta proposes to grant citizenship to rich and well-to-do foreigners who buy property on

[2] *Hispanotropicalism* is the name given to the problematic idea that Spain is more ideally suited than any other country to colonialize Africa because of its shared history and geographic proximity. The idea also has connotations of Spain whitening up Africa through miscegenation while controlling the colonies in a hierarchical, corporatist, top-down fashion. Gilberto Freyre originally coined the phrase in Portuguese colonialism as *Lusotropicalismo.* Susan Martin-Márquez expands upon this concept in order to talk about Spanish colonialism in Africa in *Disorientations* (2008).

[3] King Hassan II passed away in the summer of 1999.

the Mediterranean island, a territory that is a member of the European Union. The article explains that in Malta, "foreigners are quite welcome – if they are willing to hand over 1.15 million euros, or $1.55 million, to buy a Maltese passport." Of course everybody wants investment in their country, and who could blame the Maltese for being no different? However, the idea of rich members of society being the only ones able to afford a passport is quite problematic. To clarify the controversy, the article's author, Dan Bilefsky, explains the logic behind the criticism that people made about the plan:

> the Maltese scheme has attracted scathing criticism from those
> who say that a warm welcome for the superrich is in stark contrast
> to the cold reception given to thousands of poor African migrants
> who have washed up on Malta's beaches over the past few years,
> only to find themselves forced to live in grim detention centers,
> bereft of citizenship. (A4)

The problem is not just in Malta: it is representative of the reigning power dynamic in the Mediterranean, and it is affecting all of the southern European countries in a similar fashion, including Spain. Together, the two newspaper articles illustrate the immediate urgency of the problematics and consequences of a European Union that is disregarding the humanity of an entire continent. After listing similar "rich citizen" legislation in Cyprus and Portugal, the author notes that Spain would offer residency permits "to foreigners who buy homes worth more than $260,000."[4] The offer makes clear that European countries in the Mediterranean generally only care about one thing, and that is

[4] Bilefsky, Dan. "Give Malta Your Tired and Huddled, and Rich." *The New York Times* 1 Feb. 2014: A4. Print.

financial capital. In the context of postcolonial, race, and class considerations, this means that the "foreigners" that are allowed entry usually are white Europeans and white Westerners. Notably, those excluded from the European space are migrants from Africa, where nobody has hardly any opportunity to earn a decent living.

But how had the relationship crystallized between Spain and Africa as it did, in such negative fashion? Much of the history goes back over a millennium, and not all of it is negative, until one later arrives at the issue of coloniality that in Africa began in the 16th century. Let us begin by first discussing North Africa, since its history with Spain begins first, in chronological terms. In North Africa, the intimate relationship between the Maghreb and Iberia was ongoing for some eight consecutive centuries (711-1492 a.c.e.)[5], in what scholars today know as al-Andalus. Of course, this relationship often was diminished over time, especially since Arab control over Spain began to wane in the 11th century, during which the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba fell apart.[6] These eight centuries of Arabo-Islamic and Berber occupation have led to an historical debate over the nature of North Africa's role in shaping Iberian history, dividing northern and southern (Mediterranean) Europe (Hishaam Aidi 2006). In his writing concerning the history of al-Andalus, George Mariscal (1998) observes that since the 1550s Holland, England, Germany, and many other northern countries had created the image of a savage and backward Spain. This idea of Spain is one that is based on the *leyenda negra*[7], or "the Black Legend." Mariscal documents an Irishman's perspective of Spain, which seems to

[5] Américo Castro puts this North African/Iberian coexistence as going on from 711-1609 a.c.e., when the last of the *moriscos* were expelled from the Peninsula in the battles of the Alpujarras mountain regions.
[6] Also according to Castro, this downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate was due in large part to the Almoravid invasion of the Andalusí city in 1090 (*Realidad histórica de España* 179)
[7] All translations from Spanish to English in this dissertation are mine.

be representative of what the *leyenda negra* signified for Spain and its marginal status on the European continent: "of all nations under heaven I suppose the Spaniard is the most mingled, most uncertain and most bastardly" (1998). Due to its Andalusí legacy, in which the Maghreb and Iberia were united under the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate in Córdoba, Spain could be understood as storing in its blood the genes and lived generations of the regions of Africa with which Spanish citizens and peoples had had extensive contact and shared living experience. Therefore, while Spain now looks down at Africa, the irony is that Spain itself has had to struggle, and continues today to struggle with its own image, both at home and abroad. The nation has had to go about continually negotiating its racial blackness, its Arabness, and its whiteness. In its struggle to prove its worthy belonging in the European Union since 1986, when it officially became a member, Spain has desperately looked to claim its whiteness. The Francoist commercial tourist slogan "Spain is different" may have been for expanding the tourist industry (Delgado 2002; Crumbaugh 2009), but it is actually partially rooted in this Black Legend that spread the half-true notion that Spain was just as African/Black as it was European/White. Ever since then the country has been trying to bury the Black Legend, and in the process it has also been trying to bury its ties to its common history with Africa as well. It is a curious and futile effort, since in the late 20th century huge numbers of brown and black people that had formerly been Spain's colonial subjects (or subjects to the other European powers), were now migrating in *pateras*[8] to get back into Spain, where they would have a

[8] A *patera* is a small dinghy boat, a raft.

minimal chance (better than in their own countries) of surviving and being able to make a living.

It is true that in Spain the famed Islamic sites in Andalusia such as the Alhambra and the Generalife in Granada, the Mosque/Cathedral in Córdoba, and the Alcázar in Seville are quite celebrated – indeed, they receive a great many visitors each year, both by Spanish nationals and by the international sojourner. But in general the Spanish attitude toward the peoples of North Africa and the Maghreb and the rest of Africa is one of deep prejudice and even of hatred (Flesler 2004; Cornejo Parriego 2003; Zamora 1994). This is a tragedy, and a relatively modern one. By "modern" I am referring to Paul Gilroy's conceptualization, whereby modernity would be explicitly defined as a social reality "forged out of the particular experiences involved in being a racial slave in a legitimate and avowedly rational system of unfree labour" (58) – that is, the results of 16th century capitalism. This paradigm of modernity would influence in the gestation of Spanish disdain for black, south-of-the-Saharan Africa during the Spanish and Portuguese colonization of what is today Equatorial Guinea, far into the late 18th century, specifically in 1778 on the coastal islands of Fernando Pó and Annobon, when the Iberian countries began to colonize the region. While the Moorish occupation of Spain was a thousand years earlier, the time of expulsion of the Moors (1609) and the exploration of the seas in search for territory and profit were during a time period in which non-European peoples were only seen as valuable insofar as they could help the colonialists turn a profit and look good before Iberian royalty. The colonization of Africa involved a lot of European-imposed violence and led to a complicated relationship between mainly

the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the indigenous locals, and at times included confrontations and treaties with the British and the French trading companies, who also had commercial interests in exploiting Africa's natural resources, including its people.

In a perfect and thickly detailed account in the style of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, one could explore each and every one of the decades and centuries through which Spain would pass and how international relations between Africa and Spain would play out. To sum up, by the 19th century, Spain was in a sociopolitical position of power in Africa, notwithstanding the other competing colonial powers of Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. This situation would perpetuate itself well into the late twentieth century. Of course, there would be the key year of 1898 when Spain would lose its overseas remaining possessions (Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, the Philippines) to the U.S. during the Spanish-American War, but its colonial ambitions regarding Africa would be a continuation of a situation whereby the African colonies were in a position of political subordination to Europe. The obsession with gaining ground in the colonial race for power led Spain to make Morocco a Protectorate from 1912-1956 and to make Equatorial Guinea an official colony from 1900-1968, when it would finally cede power to the autocrat Francisco Macías Nguema.

It would be several years for the former colonies' citizens to show up on the Peninsula. Most scholars mark the 1980s as the historical period when Spain transitioned from being an emigrating country to becoming a serious hosting country for incoming migrants. But the truth is that it was starting slightly earlier than that: after the conclusion of World War II, Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009) point out that "[a]ll the

highly industrialized countries of Western Europe used temporary labour recruitment at some stage between 1945 and 1973" (97). Even Spaniards were being recruited during this period. As a concrete example in Iberia, the Spanish government in 1973 began letting in a certain number of Moroccan migrants into the country under the auspices of then-Director General of Employment from the Ministry of Labor, José Manuel Matéu de Ros, so that they could work legally in construction and metallurgy.[9] Enough of a splash was being made in the media that Spaniards, at least those in the popular press, were taking it seriously. Consider this anonymous editorial from *La vanguardia española*, dated 20 September 1973, that simultaneously sympathizes with the newcomers *and* berates them in borderline racist fashion for being a criminal class, and for not exactly being "the best" of Africa (my emphasis):

> No hemos de ser tan ingenuos, por otra parte, al hablar de delitos, como para pensar que la emigración nos envía lo mejor de las ciudades africanas.
>
> Bienvenidos sean los trabajadores que resulten necesarios. […] El hecho de ser un país "abierto", lo cual en principio nos honra, no significa que hayan de hallar aquí facilidades especiales esos mercaderes de la miseria que transportan a nuestras ciudades las hambres seculares del Atlas.

[9] According to a September 1973 edition of *Pueblo* newspaper, "El ministerio de Trabajo, según el director general, favorecerá las migraciones interiores, conocida previamente la demanda, para dar preferencia a los trabajadores españoles. En este sentido el señor Matéu anunció que la nueva ordenación impedirá que los gastos de desplazamiento recaigan sobre los interesados" ("Atención a la mano de obra marroquí" 14-09-1973).

The author's words in the editorial betray a sense of intense fear. As Sara Ahmed (2012) observes, "the nation and national subject can only love incoming others – 'embrace' them – if the conditions that enable security are already met. To love the other requires that the nation is already secured as an object of love, a security that demands that incoming others meet 'our' conditions" (135). The migrants cannot be loved because there is a sense of insecurity, a sort of implicit jingoism or even nationalism, which finds the new arrivals threatening. The migrants have not even had time to "meet 'our' conditions," that is, assimilate. The editorial's xenophobic attitude toward migrant subjects will probably ring familiar with those familiar to political elections and racism in developed and industrialized countries. For example, the rhetoric in recent elections in countries like the U.S. or France, where politicians such as Donald Trump or Marine Le Pen (herself the daughter of famed xenophobe Jean-Marie Le Pen) have used their campaigns to appeal to racist organizations such as the KKK and the religious right, and are consonant with a general pattern in social dynamics that theorists have found to be rooted in the development of post-Fordist politics (Valle and Torres 1995; de Giorgi 2007). These politicians use their discourse to appeal to working class white people who are afraid of losing their sole source of financial income to incoming migrants. Certainly by the 1980s, African migration into Spain would turn into a mainstream issue, with well-known publications such as *Interviú* publishing exclusive interviews with *mafiosos* that would "help" Africans cross the border from Spain into France.[10] Such articles illustrate

[10] See J. Erdosaín's exclusive story "Tráfico de negros en España," In addition to following the traffickers around, the reporter actually interviews one of the Spanish traffickers himself, and publishes it in the magazine. (*Interviú* 18-19 November 1980).

how immigration as a relevant issue was beginning to make its way into the conscience of Spanish citizens, even those who lived far from the coast.

In 1985, the passage of an important piece of political legislation known as the *Ley de extranjería* (or Foreigner's Law) would dramatically change Spanish responses to increased African migration. The law cracked down on non-European migrants, making it both harder for them to enter the country. For those who were able to enter, it restricted their social and political freedoms to a great extent. The law was originally one of the strictest on the books in Europe at the time (Flesler 2008), and according to Andrew Geddes (2003), was one of the main conditions for Spain's eligibility to join and become a member of the European Union. It seems that the visibility and promulgation of this act helped to foment anti-immigrant feeling in Spain, as scholars began to note a sort of cultural racism affecting the country.

It would be just a few years later that this racism, which was affecting Europe acutely, began to demonstrate a crescendo. Spain was caught up in this phenomenon, along with a number of other EU member countries. Raquel K. Gibson, for instance, asserts that:

> Emerging predominantly in the mid to late 1980s, parties with an anti-immigrant agenda quickly made themselves heard in national elections and parliaments across the region. By 1991, even countries such as Sweden and Luxembourg, not known for exclusionary nationalist politics, had witnessed the arrival of such a party. (1)

Gibson's rendition of Europe's political landscape indicates a general veering to the far right in terms of politics regarding social policies. The continent in general was negotiating its stance on migration and, with it, the changing culture and population that it would create. Some countries, such as England, Germany, and France, were more accustomed to large amounts of immigrant arrivals. Spain, however, was relatively new on the scene in terms of the massive influx of migrants. In a personal interview with the Moroccan poet Abderrahman El Fathi, the writer opines that Spain became a destination country for migrants in 1991, and states that "España no estaba preparada para la inmigración."[11] According to Ferrero-Turrión and Pinyol-Jiménez (2009), during the mid-1990s, the country pushed to facilitate the social integration of migrants through parliamentary approval of policies such as the "Social Integration of Immigrants Plan." The same scholars point out that from 1995 until 1998 there were significant social and legal initiatives taken to assure that Spaniards were cognizant of the negative effects of xenophobia and racism in their encounters and experiences with migrant subjects and their families. These initiatives included the reform of the controversial 1985 Foreigner's Law, as well as major European conferences that in 1998 resulted in the launching of an "Action Plan against Racism" (339). In 1999, before drawing the century to a close, the Amsterdam Treaty was approved, an event which helped create the conditions for intergovernmental cooperation on how to deal with migrants and their requests for asylum (339). Such events helped soften a formerly strong anti-immigrant stance in the Spanish *Ley de extranjería.* In 2000, right around the time that many of the literary works

[11] El Fathi, Abderrahman. Personal Interview, 26 Oct. 2012. Hai Ky Café, Austin, Texas.

studied in this dissertation were composed, the lack of preparation and the general xenophobia worked to create a social environment where there was support for xenophobic politicians who pandered to the extreme right-wing side of the sociopolitical spectrum. In Spain, this social fomentation would manifest itself as violent race riots, such as occurred in 2000 in the town of El Ejido, Almería (a province in Andalusia). In February of that year, the townspeople of the Spanish Levant were responding to the upsetting news that a mentally ill Moroccan migrant had killed a young girl named Encarnación López.[12] The entire town erupted in violence and local Spaniards attacked innocent migrants. According to an article in *The Economist* published within a month after the riots, the events proved that the Andalusian town was "a powder-keg of racial resentment" ("The Message of El Ejido" 17 February 2000). It is worth noting that, even as sixteen years have passed since El Ejido and the composition of this study, Spain's economy continues to flounder in 2016, and there is potential for the situation to get worse in Spain for African migrants.

At present, thousands upon thousands of migrants are attempting to cross the borders into Europe from Africa and the Middle East. Of course, this movement across borders from the Middle East and North Africa has been going on steadily for some time, but it has returned to be of prime concern in the popular press. Castles & Miller (2009)

[12] According to the *SOS Racismo Informe Anual 2001*, "El sábado 5 de febrero de 2000, un joven marroquí de 22 años con trastornos mentales apuñaló a una mujer, Encarnación López, causándole la muerte en el acto. Tras la difusión de la noticia de esta muerte, un numeroso grupo de vecinos de El Ejido cortó la carretera N-340, que atraviesa el centro urbano. Posteriormente, algunos de los concentrados se dirigieron a un centro comercial cercano, donde realizan sus compras numerosos extranjeros, gritando "seguridad, seguridad". Una vez allí, quemaron neumáticos y arrancaron el cartel de una carnicería magrebí. Se iniciaron así 72 horas de terror para la población magrebí de El Ejido […] durante todo el fin de semana, diversos vecinos de El Ejido armados con palos, piedras, cuchillos, barras de hierro y bates de béisbol amenazaron y atacaron a los marroquíes que compraban en dicho centro comercial" (108).

trace the migration from the MENA[13] region into Europe to at least the eighties, when Islamic fundamentalism began to be an issue in the region, and people looked for a way out to more politically free countries.[14] At the Spanish-African border, meaning in this case the Strait of Gibraltar, the number of deaths related to deadly sea-crossings in boats or in rafts has been steadily rising each year. Jorgen Carling strongly reaffirms the existing dire lack of concern for African migrants' lives when they are coming into Spain when he writes that, "Since the late 1980s, the Spanish-African borders, epitomized by the narrow Strait of Gibraltar, have been a focal point of migration pressure toward Europe from the South" (316). He later enumerates the estimated number of dead migrants found in the Strait's waters as being, in 2003, at over 200.[15] The migrant fatality rates appear to be rising each year, and they are beginning to make headlines in major news publications and websites all over the world. The sociopolitical reality of migration, and the heated debate that it is causing, shows at present no signs of abating. One wishes it would, but until migration no longer is an issue involving racism, gender, class, and unnecessary deaths, poets and novelists will continue to write about it, lending an air of

[13] MENA refers to the Middle East and North Africa part of the world, which is largely Arabo-Islamic.
[14] Castles & Miller specifically write, "While there were Islamic fundamentalist movements active in Western Europe in the 1970s, they were not perceived as posing much of a threat. The success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 began to change that perception […] Thus, by the 1980s, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism came to affect the transatlantic area in a variety of ways" (214-215). In Morocco, religious fundamentalism was not so much the issue as poverty. But neither did religiosity help the situation in the rest of North Africa, and soon Moroccans found themselves not heading East or South, but instead North to Europe.
[15] Carling also observes: "Migrant deaths at sea are particularly difficult to quantify because the bodies are often missing. In most cases, estimates of presumed drownings are based on survivors' accounts of the number of passengers. Overestimation of the number of deaths can occur when persons presumed to have drowned have managed to swim ashore and escape unseen. Survivors may also falsely report drowning accidents in the belief that the investigation will postpone or prevent their own return" (330).

respectability and gravitas to an issue that is conveniently forgotten by many people, and even by the press, who prefer to present on "infotainment" on the nightly news programs.

0.1 African Migration and Afro-Hispanic Literature

The question of cultural literary production and its relation to African migration continues to gestate in the space known as the *Mare Nostrum*, between the European and the African continents. Since having discovered the daring literature of Juan Goytisolo, particularly in his *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (1970), I had wanted to delve as deep as possible into the literary explorations of the theme of migration and movement. After all, much of Goytisolo's work, starting from the late sixties, was all about movement and having no roots,[16] and it took most Spanish-language readers to an unknown African continent normally ignored, when not dismissed and demonized, by Western writers. Yet Goytisolo was the only author I knew at the time who even began to scratch the surface on moving and living between Spain and Africa. But he only represented one particular direction of movement, from Spain to Morocco, and not the other way around. There was also the undeniable fact that the *autor barcelonés* (or now Marrakeshi, as he currently lives in Marrakesh), while often capable of understanding the center from a peripheral viewpoint (due to his radical leftism, and to a queer sexuality critical of heteronormativity), he was not actually Moroccan. What seemed (and still seems) also worthy of consideration was the lived viewpoint of those who have been born

[16] I am including the post-social realist works that Michael Ugarte (1982) referred to as the "Trilogy of Treason": *Señas de identidad* (1966)*, Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (1970)*, Juan sin tierra* (1975), as well as the Catalan author's later works, such as *Makbara* (1980), and *Paisajes después de la batalla* (1982).

and raised either in Morocco or Equatorial Guinea, and to consider *their* perspectives of migration within Spanish society. After all, Goytisolo can provide an unflattering and unrelenting critique of Spain and its attitude toward "foreigners," but the fact remains that he himself was born and raised on the Peninsula, and he is of a white, upper-middle class upbringing.

None of these aspects regarding Goytisolo's provenance are problems in and of themselves: however, the perspective that I felt was missing was that which one could find by talking and reading about (and to) African subjects who knew Spain like the back of their hand, new perspectives that could offer a refreshing and necessary break from Eurocentric narratives, a problem that has driven students, scholars, and citizens to refer to dominant narratives as those belonging to the exclusive group known as "The Dead White Men." It is not so much a problem that one reads literature written by white men, but it can be a problem if that is the only literary perspective one reads and studies. This decidedly sexist and Eurocentric canon becomes particularly problematic when it is the only representation and the only voice one can consult in order to understand and experience, through literature, the rest of the world. Gayatri Spivak (1999) has written on whether a reading public ever truly hears from a subaltern voice. Certainly authors who are originally from Morocco and Equatorial Guinea would qualify as being subaltern writers, since they come from regions that do not share European experiences and understandings: they are also geopolitically centered in a situation of subalternity in the sense that they come from countries that are not driving the neoliberal capitalist market, such as Western Europe and the United States. Other writers, such as Homi Bhabha

(1994) and Edward Said (1978) have also criticized the tendency for the West to think itself the best literary representative of formerly colonized countries and their peoples and cultures. As Bill Ashcroft et al. affirm in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), "cultural hegemony has been maintained through canonical assumptions about literary activity, and through attitudes to post-colonial literatures which identify them as isolated national off-shoots" (7). So it is in this frame of mind that I searched for, and was introduced to, the works of four different authors who wrote literary productions about the experiences of migration from a much less Eurocentric viewpoint.

My dissertation examines the work of the following writers: Abderrahman El Fathi (Moroccan), Ahmed Daoudi (Moroccan), Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo (Equatoguinean), and Mohamed Bouissef Rekab Luque (Moroccan). Specifically, The purpose of my research is to explore how burial in their texts *El metro, El motín del silencio, Desde la otra orilla* and *El diablo de Yudis* is conceived discursively and spatially in a manner which works to question rigid, Eurocentric concepts of identity and modernity, thus challenging the rise of xenophobia in Spain since the passing of the Foreigner's Act. All the texts are novels with the exception of *Desde la otra orilla*, which is a collection of poems.

Building on the concept of burial as a trope in literature on African migration, I will use anthropological studies, histories of African customs, critical theory, cultural studies, gender studies, postcolonial theory, and literary criticism to study how and why the concept of burial is being used in fictional and poetic literary texts on migration. I will explore burial as a trope used purposely to publicize an issue that is generally

considered with indifference by the Spanish public. Currently, there is a growing corpus of literary scholarship on African migrants in Spain. To this day Spain continues to see itself as a country generally free of racism, and such is not the case (Goytisolo & Nair 2000; Zamora 1994). Much of the studies that have been done on migration between Africa and Spain have focused on national, racial and gender identities, such as in the case of Susan Martin-Márquez (2008) and Daniela Flesler (2008). This study scrutinizes works whose authors are not from Spain, but who nonetheless choose Spain to play a major role in their works. Their literary texts reflect on Spain and the phenomenon of migration currently taking place in the Iberian nation, but the authors themselves come from a different geo-historical perspective that effects a displacement of a formerly universalizing Spanish colonial viewpoint: recent cultural criticism has begun to analyze this displacement of colonial hegemony (Martin-Márquez, Flesler, et al.). The four primary works to be analyzed in this dissertation articulate a perspective of Spain and neocolonialism that can be approached from an understanding of burial. I hypothesize that the imagery of burial and how the scenes of interment unfold in these four texts both corroborates the important investigations by Martin-Márquez and Flesler while simultaneously affirming the resilience of African voices and subjectivities. Of course the aforementioned scholars dove into this realm of investigation and questioned to what extent white Spanish authors could faithfully represent subaltern realities. However they did not extensively examine the active subject articulation of select African authors creating and speaking through their characters in order to convey and to contest precarious sociopolitical conditions and realities. Other scholars have begun to explore

this articulational vantage point from a subaltern African perspective, particularly Cristián Ricci (particular in his 2014 study *¡Hay moros en la costa!*), Benita Sampedro Vizcaya, Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo, and a still small but growing number of other scholars (a good many who have contributed articles to the 2015 anthology *African Immigrants in Contemporary Spanish Texts*). I believe that, by opening up a dialogue about death and burial, we can better understand how neoliberal power is constructed and how it is damaging not only to the people who live in less-developed countries, but also to those who live in powerful Western countries (the United States and Europe) that so often are recognized as being in control, socially, economically, and politically.

The corpus of criticism on migration literature in Spain is small, but it is beginning to grow. Since 2007 dissertation studies in this area have burgeoned. In her study (2008), Flesler has opened up a discussion on repressed memories and trauma as developed by Freud and has been able to relate this idea of trauma to the national consciousness of Spaniards and their cultural imaginary. The question of national memory and identity has been displaced by the recent arrival of immigrants, particularly those of African descent, thus challenging Spain's claim to European exclusivity as according to the "Fortress Europe" discourse that has overtaken most discussion of immigration since the mid-eighties (Martin-Márquez 2008; Kleiner-Liebau 2009; Geddes 2000). The connections between Flesler's take on cultural memory, Martin-Márquez' explorations of hegemonic identity and Kathleen Brogan's monograph on historical repression and burial (1998) constitute much of the theoretical and intellectual inspiration for this dissertation. Their articulation of a lack of subaltern perspective in contemporary Spanish cultural

production (and in Brogan's case, on the lack of black voices in contemporary U.S. literary production) is second to none, and has helped bring about a consciousness and a readiness for the reading and sharing of African articulations of coming to, and living in, Spain. Nothing has been written to date connecting burial to African immigration to Spain. Brogan has recognized the un-reconciled nature that burial can take, and it is this un-reconciled and ambiguous nature of burial as both repressive and liberating that must be studied to understand the double-edged situation of both the former colonizers and the former colonies. What follows is a brief outline of what I will be analyzing in each of my four chapters.

In Chapter 1, entitled "The Agony of Difference," I examine the work of the Tetouani poet Abderrahman El Fathi in his anthology *Desde la otra orilla*. By using Walter Mignolo's ideas on *border gnosis* expounded in *Local Histories/Global Designs.* I contextualize El Fathi's work in the period of time that is the dawning of the second millennium, when "cultural racism" in Spain is beginning to manifest itself. Similar to the racism found in other parts of Europe and discussed by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (1991), the cultural racism in Spain is especially acute toward the Maghrebi migrants. El Fathi's poetry is very aware of this cultural racism and I argue that he uses imagery from Lorquian poetry and drama in order to contest this differentialist racism that is based on the premise not of phenotypical racism, but on the more subtle belief that certain cultures are inherently unable to adapt to Western and Spanish cultures, and therefore must be excluded. I argue that Lorca's work is appealing to Spaniards because it addresses Spaniards' own double-consciousness with regards to Iberia's tenuous

historical relationship with the rest of Europe. By showing Spain that they themselves are not so pure and European, El Fathi prepares the way for his Andalusian reading public to be more open-minded about the arrival of North African migrants and their families to Spain.

In Chapter 2, "No Wrest in Peace," I analyze burial as a trope in Ahmed Daoudi's *El diablo de Yudis* to explore the themes of colonial trauma, the neocolonial aspects of the UN peacekeeping troops (the novel does not refer to them as such, but rather as the Burwilaschians); as symbols of a metatext in which a *halqa*, or Moroccan storyteller, can recuperate a more authentically Moroccan consciousness once he tells his stories to people in the Bujlud plaza (or entrance) outside of the Fez medina. By incorporating the ideas of Kathleen Brogan (*Cultural Haunting*) and Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience*), I argue that by spinning a tale of the destruction of neocolonial European forces, the Moroccan storyteller is able to overcome in part the traumas of European colonialism, which taught him that he was a nobody (or, as Achille Mbembe would say, a "shadow figure") and reassimilate himself by exorcizing his anger at Spain and France through the telling of a fictional story where burial plays a key role in disappearing the European "peacekeepers" and where burial reveals how Moroccans have very little voice for dissent in a postcolonial reality where they find themselves under the dictatorship of King Hassan II. Basically, the *halqa* is able to put back together his fragmented identity by purging himself of its haunting presence, and storytelling becomes the key strategy in overcoming this colonial trauma, demonstrating the correlation between trauma and speech and decolonization in late 20th-century Morocco.

In Chapter 3, "Djambe, Burial, and the Deconstruction of Spanish Modernity," the focus is no longer on Fez or Tetouan, and in fact does not even have anything to do with Morocco at all. Instead, I discuss the significance of Central West Africa in the migration issue, or what some may call sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis I do in this chapter focuses on an author is arguably the most famous Spanish-language writer in Africa today, Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo. His famous trilogy *Las tinieblas de tu memoria negra* (1987), *Los poderes de la tempestad* (1997), and *El metro* (2007), has been written about in prestigious journals such as *Afro-Hispanic Review* (see, for example, Baltasar Fra-Molinero's "La educación sentimental" and Carlos Nsue Otong's "Estudio de los personajes") and *Black Women, Gender + Families*. Michael Ugarte has written quite in depth about Ndongo in his key study, *Africans in Europe* (2010), as has Ugarte's University of Missouri colleague, Marvin A. Lewis, who compiled *An Introduction to the Literature of Equatorial Guinea* (2007). Ndongo has been interviewed in several publications, and he has even taught at the University of Missouri at Columbia. His work has inspired numerous dissertations. In my analysis, I will focus on his excellent novel on migration from Cameroon to Spain, *El metro*, which forms a part of the aforementioned trilogy. The novel contains several memorable burial scenes, and I will be analyzing what these scenes reveal about the state of modernity in Africa and how this modernity relates to witchcraft. *El metro* is unique because, while it was penned by a male author, women play a strong role in redefining modernity so that it better fits black Africa's realities in the 21st century. I part from the ideas expressed by two Afro-Hispanic scholars, Chad Montuori and Beatriz Celaya, that the old rubric in Africa was to compete with Europe in

terms of who had the greater amount of masculinity. I argue that Ndongo's novel makes the case for a new modernity that does not define modernity and self-determination in terms of being adequately masculine, but in terms of women taking leadership in their communities and guiding their families toward new realities. By looking at several burial scenes, I identify how each scene frames an understanding of how women can effect important change in modernizing Africa in a way that is in harmony with Africa's 21st-century values. In doing so, I fall back on some of the ideas where modernity and witchcraft (in Cameroon the latter is known as *djambe*) intersect. In order to make this argument, I use Néstor García Canclini's conception of modernity (*Hybrid Cultures*) and on Peter Geschiere's scholarship on Cameroonian *djambe.* Essentially, I argue that the imagery of burial helps to contest oppressive postcolonial use of masculinist witchcraft by shaping an understanding of how women can potentially use their own sort of *sorcellerie* to fight the political oppression that people living in Equatorial Guinea, Senegal, and Cameroon have to live under.

In Chapter 4, "Gender, Burial, and Confession," I argue that some forms of confession can actually be oppressive, and not liberating, especially in Morocco. By incorporating Foucault's ideas on the role of the confession in the West (*The History of Sexuality*) and Judith Butler's writing on "passionate attachments" (*The Psychic Life of Power*), I argue that the main female protagonists in Mohamed Bouissef Rekab Luque's novel, *El motín del silencio*, wrestle with patriarchy in two ways. I argue that one of the protagonists does not confess because and because she does not, it is actually easier for her to disconnect from patriarchal oppression, because confession as the West

understands it is useless in Morocco: the other female protagonist does confess, and finds herself stuck in an oppressive and lustless marriage for the remainder of the text's diegetic narrative. In light of this Foucauldian idea of confession[17], I try to understand the imagery of burial and what kind of relationship confession has with burial, if any. I analyze the role of confession in creating a sort of self-satisfaction that distracts from any real emotional need and desire to free oneself from patriarchy. I argue that in Morocco, confession in the Western-style, be it by writing a letter or by admitting one's sins, actually creates a buffer for discussing one's true problems. Confession thus buries the true cause of unhappiness under the act of being busy and "trying" to deal with one's issues. Like Foucault, I end up concluding that perhaps the best route of action would be to not discuss the underlying issue, and to simply deal with it in a more drastic fashion. Where Foucault expresses the idea that it is better not to talk about sex in terms of identity, I argue that Farah's emphasis on action and not words creates the basis for breaking with patriarchal oppression.[18] I posit that one of the characters should not have confessed her problems in a letter to her father. Had she not confessed she would have been able to more effectively bury the patriarchy that underlies the tedious and passionless life of her marriage.

[17] The confession is Foucauldian in the sense that the subject reveals what they suppose to be a major aspect of their social identity to an audience.

[18] One incredibly important poetic work that stands out in the contexts of feminism and changes to Morocco's *Mudawana* (the country's legal family code) and hence to its patriarchal hegemony would be the collection of audacious and brilliant poetry written by Lamiae El Amrani entitled *Tormenta de especias* (2010). Also key to understanding the role of women in Moroccan society, but complicated by issues of biculturality both due to Timazighin (feminine plural for people of Berber ethnicity: the masculine plural is Imazighen) background and to Catalonian urban experiences is anything by Najat El Hachmi, with special attention to her brave novel *El último patriarca* (originally published in Catalán as *L'últim patriarca*) in 2008. These incredible works are worthy of studies from various theoretical angles, especially in the postcolonial and decolonial fields of analysis. The lack of emphasis on actual physical migration in these literary texts, however, has kept the texts from being key works of study in this investigation.

The reason I chose to discuss burial as the central theme of my dissertation is because I am sensitive to metaphorical imagery in texts, as well as the subtle allegories that allude to parallel sociopolitical realities that sometimes cannot be named due to the lack of freedom of speech at the time in a given area. I find that many are afraid to talk about universalisms because the prefix "uni" is thought to be synonymous to hegemonic control and prescriptive formulas of thought, as if "one-size-fits-all" and generalities are applied from the top to all that are subaltern to it. Part of the problem, I believe, is that burial and its imagery can help readers understand how neoliberal politics is imposing, as Achille Mbembe in "Necropolitics" (2008) might have it, a necro-political order in which some are destined under the rubric of capitalism to lived dehumanized lives at the margins of society. Burial also can help encourage a reading public to think of the semantics of "universality" in terms of how poverty and violence is experienced around the world by similar populations (non-white, and usually speakers of non Indo-European languages).

In any event, I use "universality" in this dissertation interchangeably with the "commonality." Now, with regard to my conception and idea of universality: I am of the idea that censorship is universally practiced. It may be practiced in different forms in different parts of the world, but it is a universal problem. In times of Francoist Spain, the authorities either locked up the dissidents, refused to publish differing thoughts, fired freethinkers from their jobs, or shot any one who opposed the regime. In the United States people such as Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have spoken at length on the softer censorship that occurs, where advertisers can apply gentle pressure to what kind of

articles are published in the popular press, or in other institutions, where a track system only cultivates great thinkers who have the "right/correct" thoughts. But one thing is certain: censorship, in one form or another, exists everywhere. It may be less in some countries than in others, and it may depend on what is considered culturally taboo in a given region, but the prevention of Orwellian thought crime is alive and well in every society. Every power must guard its self-interests, and as a corollary, must find a way to shut down dissent. This is why checks and balances of power are so important if a society is to be considered to be a free one. In these four texts that I will be examining in this study, burial has some sort of relation to the censorship of thought, and this fascinates me. I wanted to know why, as I read these four texts, I found these rather noteworthy scenes of burial (I myself admittedly coming from a Western cultural upbringing) so scary, sad, and, at times, surprisingly and deliciously comical. I simply wanted to know why the scenes of burial were eliciting this reaction from me.

In the end, I think that the imagery of burial interests me because it communicates the idea that censorship of thought and expression is invariably linked to racial, religious, gender, and socioeconomic segregation. I think that by understanding burial from an African perspective, as well as how it relates to colonial politics, one can come to understand the translocal problems of race and class in any society. Universality, I think, is the key.

Chapter 1

The Agony of Difference: Burial, Border Gnosis, and Lorquian Imagery in Abderrahman El Fathi's Poetry

Ellos [los gitanos] son la sal de una sociedad
paulatinamente embotada y amnésica: sin su presencia,
España sería infinitamente más chata, sosa y conformista. –
El peaje de la vida (165)

The best thing that ever happened for Morocco was that Spain would market itself as "different." Of course, this would be the official motto for the Iberian nation's tourist industry: "Spain is Different."[19] Underlying this marketing strategy, however, hundreds of years of complex and contradictory history that makes the country's push to become a destination for history aficionados, tapa "foodies," and beach enthusiasts a difficult one at times. One of Spain's key challenges, especially in regards to consolidating its membership in the European Union, has been to bury its ties to Africa, especially with regard to Europe's popular understanding of Spain's geopolitical status, thanks to a quote made famous by Alexandre Dumas, that "Africa begins at the Pyrenees."[20] Spain has at many junctions in its history both embraced and repudiated its historical ties to North Africa, and specifically with the Maghreb. It has selectively highlighted its Medieval Moorish history due to its historical distance from the present, but it has anxiously tried to distinguish itself as closer to Europe than to Africa ever since. The Iberian country has never fully identified with its proximity to Morocco, a neighbor that lies only fourteen kilometers (approximately nine miles) away. The shared history not only includes a

[19] For more on how the motto was created, read Justin Crumbaugh's study *Destination Dictatorship* (2010) on the tourist industry in Spain in the late-Francoist period of the sixties.
[20] See Barbara Fuchs' *Exotic Nation* (2009), p. 1.

centuries long common patrimony, known as al-Andalus, where Moroccans and most of Iberia were subjects of the same Muslim empire, but also during the Protectorate, during which parts of Northern Morocco were a Spanish colony. One poet who acknowledges this shared history, and who writes passionately, and often erotically, about it is Abderrahman El Fathi, from the northern Moroccan city of Tetouan. His charged writing about Spain is combined with a concern for the deaths of migrants off the coasts of Spain, and their tragic unofficial burials at sea. In this chapter my central thesis is that in his poetic anthology *Desde la otra orilla* (2004) El Fathi contests Spanish "cultural racism" by appealing to Spaniards' own border gnosis. Much of El Fathi's poetry is loaded with Lorquian imagery that intertwines with images of being buried at sea. The necessity and the urgency of contesting a virulent Spanish racism can be juxtaposed with the burials at sea because it appears that El Fathi quietly finds a way to unbury the historical record of cultural plurality in Iberia, bringing to the surface an abject multicultural body from which Spanish politicians, writers, and inhabitants had been attempting to distance themselves. The abject relationship with foreign inhabitants had certainly reached a critical level by the turn of the millennium, evidenced in the "ethnic filter" discourse.

The "ethnic filter" discourse, "partidario de filtrar a los inmigrantes en función de su procedencia geográfica pretextando razones culturales o religiosas que justificarían una mayor integrabilidad de determinados colectivos frente a otros" (133), and discussed in the Introduction at the beginning of this dissertation, can be confirmed by Daniela

Flesler (2004) as being tied to a sort of Spanish cultural racism[21], in which discrimination against entire groups of people is justified under the dubious logic that some cultures are inherently incompatible with the (itself arbitrary) definition of Spanish culture. The paradox is that Spain itself is not unified, neither politically, nor culturally nor linguistically. It would seem an extreme measure to expect migrants to assimilate to any single definition of what "Spanish" is if even the identitarian adjective itself is up for debate. One enormously popular poet that many Spanish citizens will recognize, and identify with, is Federico García Lorca. Perhaps this is because Lorca has always been associated with actively engaging knowledges across borders, and with selectively drawing from different cultures and regions whose customs, practices, and ideas seem preferable, while dropping those same elements in regards to what seems to be outdated and vestigial. One could say that Lorca demonstrates in his poetry a sort of border gnosis that reveals the porousness of cultural bodies. Walter Mignolo, writing in *Local Histories/Global Designs* (2000), observes that "Border gnoseology is a critical reflection on knowledge production from both the interior border of the modern/colonial world system and its exterior borders" (11), adding that it values and prioritizes "new forms of knowledge in which what has been subalternized and considered interesting only as object of study becomes articulated as new loci of enunciation" (13). In this regard, Lorca's work is pluralistic and inclusive of diverse communities that include both modern and the colonial subjectivities, be they Andalusian, Gypsy, or North African. Throughout

[21] Flesler writes, "This new or *differentialist* racism which justifies racist conduct propagates the notion that cultures exist as isolated capsules whose well-being depends on the maintenance of distances and limits with other, 'foreign' cultures, so that if you want to avoid racism, you have to respect the 'tolerance thresholds', maintain 'cultural distances'." (*New Racism* 105)

this chapter I will be analyzing El Fathi's various poems and examining their use of Lorquian imagery and its connection to burial. Since the Moroccan poet is not nearly as well known as Lorca at this point in time, I will first begin by giving some background about the author and his oeuvre.

It is crucial that the reader understand that El Fathi is very familiar with Spain, his northern neighbor: his cultural formation and familial upbringing stressed the culture and achievements of Spain. Raised in Tetouan, El Fathi was born in 1964, just eight years after Spain had given up its Protectorate status in Morocco. Tetouan, of course, was the capital of the Spanish Protectorate, and El Fathi's family is in many ways representative of this history. The poet's father worked as an administrator in the Protectorate, and his grandfather was a member of the Spanish-Moroccan navy, working in Spanish-Arabic translation. Both his father and grandfather spoke fluent Spanish, a language that was often used in the household. Curiously, his mother did not speak in Spanish, and so only spoke to her children in Moroccan Arabic, or darija. One can see how, therefore, El Fathi's household was a home space in which the Spanish and Arabic vernaculars were used at liberty, but along certain gender lines, and each one associated with a certain space. Brought up in a bilingual atmosphere, El Fathi was also educated at a Spanish-language secondary school in Tetouan known as Jacinto Benavente, and his doctorate studies that came later took him to both Cádiz and Sevilla, where he spent many years of his life studying Spanish literature. This formation becomes evident in his poetic writings, where El Fathi often comments on the precarious relationship between Spain and Morocco.

El Fathi's *Orilla* anthology contains an abridged collection of different poem books that the author has published in different years, some of them previously unpublished: *Triana, imagines y palabras* (1998); *Abordaje* (2000); *África en versos mojados* (2002); *El cielo herido* (2003); and *Primavera en Ramallah y Bagdad* (2003). Published in 2004, the anthology contains several texts of each of these books, leaving out some poems entirely. The themes in the anthology are therefore diverse, with *Triana* containing many nostalgic poems and a certain eroticism of the natural elements (mountains, rivers, etc.); in *Abordaje* El Fathi tackles the subject of migration and the *pateras* in the Mediterranean Sea; in *África en versos mojados* the author also talks about migration. The last two books also include meditations on death, absence, bodies, eroticism and the sea as a main protagonist. Once the reader comes upon the poetry in *El cielo herido*, there are poems about the 2003 war in Iraq and criticism of American neo-colonialism, as well as a sort of embrace of Arab identity that comes with the commonality of suffering brought on by Western (ie, US and European) countries and their military incursions. In the final book included in the anthology, *Primavera en Ramallah y Bagdad*, El Fathi continues to talk of death during the American invasion of Iraq, the situation of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and he expresses a common solidarity with the peoples of the global South in their struggles against poverty, racism and classism. He does all this while embracing the thematics of eroticism, preferring to write about the life-affirming aspects of sexuality, sociability and intimacy to writing solely about isolation, distance, and bitterness.

El Fathi's poetry does not appear to be obssessed with identity politics. This is no surprise, as his poetry is appealing to Spain's own ambiguous identitarian facets, and so he would elicit in his work a Spain that is dramatically less tied to specific identity traits. The poet does not advocate for a strict collective engagement, or of a faithful solidarity with any particular religion, creed, or tribe. Rather his poetry combines the disillusioning experience of migration along with the loneliness of waking up alone in a cold bed. Common to both is the idea of an emotional connection, a sense of both land and human as a beloved: one can feel nostalgic and sad for a lost land just as one can for a lost lover. One aspect of El Fathi's writing that keeps his poetry from being overly political is he pens verses that, instead of drawing obstinate fences and walls around a stance or feeling, acknowledge a sense of vulnerability and hurt. His is a poetry that is open to being wounded again; this gives his work, even the most bitter of it, a certain warmth. This warmth comes in spite of the coldness with which many Spanish people treat Moroccan migrants. While sometimes sad and melancholic, his poetry is rarely defensive. This does not mean that El Fathi's poetry has no political and social relevance. It would be impossible for El Fathi to write about Moroccan migration in today's context without it being political.[22] The poet is able to compose in such a fashion that the political and the social seem to occupy a secondary, or even tertiary plane. Without a doubt, El Fathi's writing is taking place in the world of flesh and bone, and in the context of political

[22] When considered in the context of other Spanish-language Moroccan poets, such as Mohamed "Momata" Mamoun Taha (*Lágrimas de una pluma*, 1993) and Ahmed Mgara (*Tetuán: embrujo andalusí*, 1996), El Fathi's poetry is quite bold and audacious in its willingness to address migration, borders, and death. Perhaps influenced by the other two, however, El Fathi never completely turns himself over to pure political posturing. All three authors incorporate a nostalgia for Morocco's Andalusí past.

controversy over migration and human rights. Considering that El Fathi is from Morocco, it is important to note that there exists a tradition among Arab poets to invoke Lorca in their work. Rasheed El-Enany observes that thirty years after the Andalusian Bard's death, "Lorca's poetry and, more importantly, his 'martyrdom,' became a banner to a generation of Arab poets who saw themselves, as he did, as 'revolutionaries' fighting on the side of the people in a world still under the dominance of various kinds of fascism" (260). El Fathi's poetry is tacitly demanding that readers recognize Moroccans first as people, and as such, to stir up feelings of sympathy and understanding for a group of people that is often treated as second- or third-class citizens. In order to do this El Fathi incite in his readership feelings of being excluded because of its identity as also belonging to an unaligned South, a South that distances itself from hegemony and European exclusivity and whiteness. His poetry is written to induce pleasure, and enjoyment at the beauty of the word, as well as to induce a sense of wanderlust-like disorientation. However, El Fathi never writes at the cost of forgetting his people, and always appears to compose his texts with the goal of awaking Spaniards to the plight of North African migrants who are arriving into Spain and into the rest of Europe.

1.1 Self, Other, and The Porous Borders In-Between

The first poem that I will analyze is one that comments explicitly on Moroccan migration to Spain, and on the pain of having to accept loss. In this particular text, we observe imagery that resembles Lorca's "Romance sonámbulo," particularly the scene in

the famous poem where the Guardia Civil[23] pursues a poor Gypsy smuggler. There will also be some parts of the poem that verbatim come to dialogue intertextually with the Granada author's classic drama, *Bodas de sangre.* In this text, the tense relationship between the Spanish authorities and the Romani community is changed so that the same dynamic applies between the police and Moroccan migrants:

> […] Y una madre espera a su hijo
> pero una ola se enamoró del moreno
> y a las profundidades lo
> arrastró
> Así es el amor
> un golpe de mar
> […]
> No lamento su muerte
> no lloro su ausencia
> Y no perdono a las OLAS.
> TRAICION. EL MAR.
> […]
> LA MAR del SUR es tierna
> obediente. El Norte es traición. (*Orilla* 50)

The entire thematics of the poem is about division: the division of self, the division of borders, and the division of power structures. In the verse "no lloro su ausencia" (v. 20),

[23] Spain's oldest law enforcement agency.

the poetic voice is referring to a double absence, to the the physical death of a young man at sea, but also of the intellectual death of a man who fears to express himself in a Moroccan milieu where he has very little rights for freely expressing dissenting thought. It is also possible that the poetic voice does not cry over absence in the sense that having no particular identitarian roots is a lack that fails to be a cause for worry.The "moreno" who drowns also has more than one significance, where two subjectivities are buried at sea in one single poetic rendering of death – the migrant himself, drowning at sea, and the self of the poetic "I," understanding that with the death of the nomadic subject in the Mediterreanean a part of the speaker is diminished as well. At the end of the poem, in its final verses, the poetic voice expresses that "LA MAR del SUR es tierna/obediente. El Norte es traición." The end of the poem helps frame a perfect understanding of what the text is truly about. In this case, treason ("traición" at the very end of the text) is referring to betraying one's own personal values, of refusing to feel sorry for the deaths and the situation of the migrants who leave Morocco for the north. It is the failure to speak up when one knows that social injustices are occurring, where a people with very little lose their lives because they have very few other alternatives than to migrate to Spain, and therefore a treason far more injurious than any committed against the state, since it goes against one's very own conscience. By burying one's own voice, the issue of migrants dying at sea is made less urgent. In this sense, both the speaker and the "moreno" in the poem are migrants, but in different ways: arguably the "moreno" is more courageous, for he has had the nerve and the audacity to actually put into practice his ideas of getting out of Morocco. It is interesting that there is no mention of poverty in the text, and so as

readers we cannot say that the escape to the north was due to financial reasons. The person could have been escaping polítical oppression, or could be an apostate, running away from a country where his family has disowned him. In any event, what we have is the possibility that the person is escaping political oppression in a country where the monarch has the say in nearly all affairs, almost without opposition.

It is no stretch of the imagination to conceive that the reference to the cardinal directions "norte" and "sur" are used to represent the two countries of Morocco and Spain. In this case, the diegetic figure of the man who drowns in the sea is a Moroccan man trying to make his way to Europe. In order to embark on his trip, he has had to leave behind those whom he loves most: his mother and his lover and what might be cousins, sisters, and/or daughters. In the third verse of the original and entire text, one finds a word that is also important in *Bodas de sangre*, precisely because it is a symbol of marriage and commitment. This world would be "anillo," which the poem in its entirety refers to in the text's original third verse, and where the poetic voice describes sharks swimming away with a ring. What does "anillo" have to do with the migrant's death? On the one hand, the ring could be the physical sign of one's marriage to a romantic partner: but it also has the complex meaning of "compromiso" which can be translated into English as both "engagement," in the wedding sense and in the social activist sense. In terms of border gnosis, this can have quite a bit of relevance to migration studies, and to Mignolo's studies regarding knowledge production along international border zones that separated by levels of socioeconomic development. Mignolo writes that "border thinking structures itself on a double consciousness, a double critique operating on the imaginary

of the modern/colonial world system, of modernity/coloniality" (87). The space that the poem chooses as its setting would appear to be the Mediterranean, which is a natural border between Spain and Morocco, two countries with two different relationships to coloniality. Spain was a colonizer, and Morocco was the colonized from 1912-1956. The seductive aspect of Spain encourages the speaker to forget Morocco and its experiences as a colonial subject of empire. But one has to consider that the author penning this poem is Moroccan, and therefore there appears to be a sense of urgency on the poet's part to remain committed to being true to one's people. In other words, there is a sense of responsibility that the speaker carries here, as well as an affect that is inclined to a North African sensibility.

Being true to one's people and to one's social obligations can be arbitrary, depending on what is going on in one's life. For example, if one is in the midst of strong political repression, there will be great fear in expressing unpopular thoughts that could be understood as speaking out on behalf of human rights in a way that undermines a regime's discourse. In this poem the speaker is lamenting a sort of survivor's guilt, or at least a guilt over not having risked it all. This poem is about a speaker who wishes s/he had done more, and had been willing to speak out about the political issues that have caused Maghrebi people to migrate in the first place. It is about staying in a safe place, and the border between safety and danger, the frontier between listening to the feelings welling up and then talking about it, and ignoring those feelings all together. To a degree, the poem is as much about physical migration across border zones such as the

Mediterranean as it is about self-censorship and the fear of unburying unorthodox thoughts.

If one takes the time to have a *café au lait*, or a mint tea in one of the country's many *salons de thé*, one thing that will definitely be evident to any Western visitor is the prominance of pictures of King Mohammed VI, which are everywhere. It is as if his eye is upon you. Of course, the photo is a representation of the monarch, and it is not actually him, but the photograph serves to put the idea in one's head that whatever one says, *Big Brother* is there, and *Big Brother* is watching and listening. It is not an explicit form of thought control, but the message is there all the same: Respect the monarchy and do not question it. In order for a person to escape this network of political and social orthodoxy, one needs to find spaces that are outside the normatives in order to foment new ideas, and to have the flexibility to re-think cultural assumptions that have been taken for granted. That is, it is necessary to have the freedom to think if one is to be considered free at all. This is why the text speaks of the South as being obedient and tender in the final verses. The North is treason in the sense that it signifies a region or space that is outside of the safe, home territory: it is foreign, different, and subversive. The same could be applied to a person from the North, who learns to think based on what s/he has learned while living and observing living conditions and attitudes in the Southern latitudes.

If we consider the aspect of freethinking and dissidence discussed above, it is then possible to discuss how people who migrate in their mind are still intellectually alive, and those who have learned to be seduced by false discourses are psychologically dead, and are simply going through the motions of whatever it is that the regime expects them to

do, to say, or to think. They have learned to bury a subjectivity of theirs that is not acceptable to society. The poem uses a sociopolitical issue, one that is urgent, to talk in veiled fashion about what it is like, psychologically, intellectually, to dwell within the border zone, to straddle both the orthodox and the unorthodox. Mignolo writes about this when he contrasts two famous thinkers' critiques of Christianity, those of Nietzsche and those of Abdelkebir Khatibi. Nietzsche for example inhabits a mainly Christian zone, he dwells within the heart of it, and his critique comes from lived experience. Khatibi, however, who is most well-known for having written *Love in Two Languages* (1983), critiques the religious culture of Christianity from outside of its lived borders. According to Mignolo:

> it is one thing to deconstruct Western metaphysics while inhabiting it, and it is quite another to work on decolonization as a form of deconstruction, from the historical exteriority of Western metaphysics; that is, from those places that Western metaphysics transformed into 'silenced societies' or 'silenced knowledges' (73).

When Nietzsche famously states "God is dead," his observation was partly in line with the idea that people live fragmented lives, and that there is no genealogy. According to this logic, one does not have to be born Christian to understand it or to criticize it. This logic allows one to think abstractly from one space about another one: in more contemporary terms one could consider the U.S. invasion of Iraq that began in 2003. A common defensive argument in the military and in some neo-conservative circles against anti-war protesters was that one could not criticize the war if one was not actually there

and had not actually experienced it. The argument went that only those who had been and seen the conflict in Iraq could criticize the situation, since they spoke from first-hand knowledge. Border gnosis allows one to speak and to opine without first-hand knowledge: it validates that one can think in another space while living in another. Mignolo referred to to this as "the constitution of a new epistemological subject that thinks *from and about* the borders" (110). When he writes, in addition that "We should perhaps begin to think from border languages instead of from national languages (256)" he is not only speaking about spoken academic languages and identifiable, categorical dialects, but also about idioms, used both visually, emotionally, and viscerally, idioms that speak to a border region of the mind that is prisoner to no single ideology of thought, and of no –ism.

If then a person does not need to be born in a certain state or condition in order to critically think about it, then this frees the subject to no longer feel that "belonging" is even a valid idea. If the Nietzschean God is no more, than family is only as valid as the people one feels close too, not necessarily to the people who biologically are *de la misma sangre.* A person can learn a culture after they are born, and they do not have to be born in it to comprehend its idiom. El Fathi is not the first to be critical of cultural practices in Morocco: there have been quite a few others. Mohammed ʻAbed al-Jabri, for example, recognized the need for original thought within a particular Moroccan context: In his *Arab-Islamic Philosophy* (1999), he observes that "When we speak of modernity, we must not therefore understand it as do the European intellectuals and researchers for whom modernity is a stage that represents the transcending of the Age of Enlightenment

and of the Renaissance […](3).” In El Fathi’s case, this re-thinking of modernity from a Moroccan perspective would mean learning to think like a Moroccan, yes, but by also including select elements from Western thought. With practice and with effort, a person can become an(o)ther. The implications of being able to think from one spot about another is that one can learn to adapt to other cultures, and there is then no such thing as being naturally imcompatible with any other culture, a fallacious logic that underlies the “cultural racism” assumption that Spanish discourse uses against Arabo-Islamic migrants.

When the speaker of the poem describes how the migrant was seduced by the waves (“pero una ola se enamoró del moreno/ y a las profundidades lo/ arrastró/ Así es el amor/ un golpe de mar” v. 12-16), the words are an allusion to a segment of Lorca’s *Bodas de sangre.* In the final scene of the play, the bride comes back to her fiancé’s mother, explaining why she was so easily seduced by Leonardo, her former lover, and hence why she abandoned her rich but rather boring future husband, whom she refers to as an “hijo”:

> Yo corría con tu hijo que era como un niñito de agua fría y el otro
> me mandaba cientos de pájaros que me impedían el andar y que
> dejaban escarcha sobre mis heridas de pobre mujer marchita, de
> muchacha acariciada por el fuego. Yo no quería, ¡óyelo bien!, yo
> no quería. ¡Tu hijo era mi fin y yo no lo he engañado, pero el brazo
> del otro me arrastró como un golpe de mar… (*Bodas* 165-166)

The reason the poem has culled from this aspect of Lorca’s drama is because in the *Bodas* play, the bride feels stuck between convention and being true to herself and acting on her

own inclinations. She knows that society will accept her if she buries her true feelings and continues to go through the motions, marrying a man she doesn't even care about. In the poem there is a similar idea, but the difference is that the speaker is afraid of being punished for thinking outside of the bounds of everyday Moroccan society. The bride, should she speak her true desire, would be punished for thinking outside of the traditional view of marriage as an economic pact between two families.

A part of the poem, in the original and entire text, in which the indifferent Guardia Civil members bring the body of the deceased to the mother ("Espera una madre/ la Guardia Civil/ se lo ha traído" v. 4-6), seems to have an intertextual relationship with García Lorca's most famous of poems, "Romance sonámbulo," a poem where at the end, drunken Guardia Civil officers arrive at a Gypsy house in the morning, knocking violently at the door. In both poems, El Fathi's and Lorca's, there is the sense that the Guardia Civil is not sympathetic to outsiders, in this case, neither toward the gypsies nor toward the North Africans. The authorities' lack of humanity in their treatment of the other is part of the frustration that the speaker is expressing. By the time El Fathi begins to write about them, they are no longer so openly hostile to subaltern groups, but they are indifferent to the lives of those who are outside of mainstream Spanish culture. Migration and death have by the turn of the millennium become so banal that the Guardia Civil no longer acts surprised at the death of one more migrant.

But the fact that the Guardia Civil does not care about North African deaths does not mean that their own Spanish relatives from the 1950s and 1960s have never experienced similar dehumanization and maltreatment. Juan Goytisolo has written about

the Spanish experience of leaving Iberia during the first ten or so years of the Franco dictatorship, and how many of these émigrées have left for France only to be treated like Mbembian shadow figures, on the margins of society. However, part of the complication as far as Spanish receptivity to migrants is related to the fact that Spain was at one time very desireous of EU membership, and one of the ways that Spain could qualify to be a member of the union was to crack down on the migration arriving into the country in a 1985 piece of legislation known as The Foreigner's Law (*La ley de extranjería*). The strictness of this law made it very hard for migrants to find stable housing and jobs in the Peninsula, but it made it very easy for Spain to bury its ties to Africa. Daniela Flesler (2008) described the law as one "which many consider to be one of the most restrictive in Europe" (30). Goytisolo has made fun of the arrogance of certain Spaniards, calling them the "nuevos ricos" who have conveniently forgotten their own desperate excursions outside of Spain during the 1950s and the 1960s, noting that "la memoria de un pasado cifrado en su anhelo de huir de la pobreza no plasma en una comprensión de la miseria ajena ni en una ética solidaria" (*El peaje de la vida* 184). The parallels between the two situations, separated by about two generations, brought Goytisolo to also write about the xenophobia of the French toward Spanish émigrées as recorded in mid-century guides for French people looking to hire Spanish maids.[24]

In one of his novels, the author would describe Spaniards' obsession with modern products and social status during what many called the *Dictablanda* of Franco in the

[24] In one of the excerpts that Goytisolo culls from the guide, itself titled *Guide bilingue ménager,* the treatment French people give to Spaniards in the 1960s is incredibly similar to the contemporary treatment Spaniards give to Arabs: "El español tiene el sentido del deber y no el de la reivindicación, tan querido del francés. En general, no se queja y acepta su condición, con esa fatalidad heredada de la ocupación árabe" (*El peaje de la vida,* 190).

sixties and seventies: "nuevos dueños, nuevos señores de la novísima, reluciente situación: desarrolllo industrial, sociedad de consumo!: […] sometiendo al imperio de la rectilinear voluntad hispana el cuadro de mandos del Citroen ultimo modelo: encrestados siempre de la voluble ola, resueltamente IN" (*Reivindicación* 163). All this would later collude to create a milieu in Spain where the obssession, by the 1980s and 1990s, was to simply blend in with the rest of developed Europe, leading authors to publish bland, normative novels that make Spanish literature unremarkable and normal.[25] In writing on Spanish desires to become normatively more European both market-wise and literature-wise, Elena L Delgado (2003) laments the dying out of what others have referred to as "the 'split consciousness of Spanish intellectuals: torn between the utopia of modernity and the awarenesss that this very modernity condemns them, as members of a second-rank nation marked by its Semitic heritage and "primitivism," to remain outside of its paradigm (126)." The idea of a Spanish 'split consciousness' is remarkably similar to Mignolo's ideas on border gnosis, and perhaps resembles a sort of postmodern reconfiguration of W.E.B. DuBois' class-and race-conscious conceptualization of "double-consciousness," or the understanding that one is living at once in two different worlds.

For the Moroccans like El Fathi, the border gnosis becomes a way to keep his own critical sense from being buried away, instead of just uncritically accepting orthodox thought in Morocco. But it is also about unburying the long-lost connection that

[25] See Jonathan Mayhew's fascinating study on the normalization and intentional blandness in Spanish literature during the period of "poesía de la experiencia" in which Spanish authors tried to become canonized by writing literature for a generic European audience ("Poetry, politics, and power").

historically has connected the two Mediterreanean countries for years. Spain is the Africa of Europe, or at least Unamuno would have said something to that effect in 1898, highlighting that Spain's African heritage is precisely what made Spain unique and "different" from the rest of Europe.[26] There is even, in the Spanish conceptualization, a consciousness of race, something that Américo Castro has commented on as being a consciousness that first began in Spain during the times of al-Andalus. In any event, Spain feels a double pull, to on the one side to become a normalized and acceptable European Union member state, while at the same time preserving its uniqueness (expressed often in its "exoticness," which appears to be code for its non-white aspects).

It is to this Spanish 'split-consciousness' that El Fathi is appealing to in his poetry, one that he sees as similar to his and Lorca's border gnosis, where there is an understanding of two cultural mentalities at once, along with their overlapping similarities and historical origins. Cristián Ricci has written that writers such as El Fathi "are very conscious of the ontological and epistemological differences between both cultures, and can cross from one side to the other (from West to East), and criticize both cultures, with no need to request a 'visa' from any academic guard" ("African Voices" 208). It is this knowledge that El Fathi has that gives him the advantage in being able to write poetry in Spanish. Perhaps what El Fathi sees when he looks at Spain and Morocco are two countries that share a liminality, Spain with regards to Europe at large, and Morocco with regards to both Spain and Europe. But in El Fathi's vision, Spain is losing

[26] Daniela Flesler (2008) adds about the author of *Niebla*: "Miguel de Unamuno, in his 1906 'Sobre la europeización,' proudly claims "Africannness" as one of the main values that constitute Spain as outside of Europe. He takes Saint Augustine's African identity as a model of non-European thought, and contrasts 'modern European' to 'old African,' choosing the latter, old African wisdom." (23)

what made it so special and unique precisely because it is leaving Morocco behind, and in order to convey this he evokes in his poetry a sense of bitterness and even betrayal:

> Engañosa Andalucía
> dulce espuma Lunar
> ojos de azufre quemado
> lloraban de rabia las arenas,
> el desierto me hería
> sus palmeras se introducían en todo mi
> Corazón.
> Fuera me esperaba el pez
> de mi obstinada rabia.
> Jamás retorné a Andalucía. (70)

This poem relates to the earlier poem because the imagery of the fish can represent two things at once: Cristián Ricci has observed that "pez" could be a pre-Islamic reference to the dragon-like fish found in Maghrebi fountains and water wells (*¡Hay moros en la costa!* 104). Ricci observes that the underwater creature can represent "al monstruo de caos, enemigo de lo terrestre y ordenado" (104).

The interlocutor expresses a sense of violent anger at being rejected from Spanish shores and the "ordenado" streets found in the modern and rationalized streets found in Andalusia. The enemy of "lo terrestre y ordenado" could also be read as an opposition to the rationalized violence that are the Spanish surveillance borders, from which the Spanish Civil Guard overlooks and "protects" the Iberian coastline, throwing out any

supposedly "undesirable" subjects. The other interpretation here, that aligns somewhat with the imagery in the first poem here analyzed, is that the sharks in the poem, but in represent competitive, western classical liberal economies, where competition leads people to consume others and to destroy others for their own personal profit. Combining the two perspectives of the fish, being on the one hand a symbol that counteracts western rationality but at the same time the ultimate degree of western economic greed, it is as if the poetic voice is challenging us to look for a third option that is neither chaos nor competition, or perhaps is demanding that we see the chaos that supply and demand actually create as being unhealthy for the continued existence of humankind on the planet. It is the first option that El Fathi is likely going after in this poem: part of the reason the image of the fish is deployed is as a symbol of movement, specifically of movement away from all the other undersea creatures, such as sharks, that tend to be associated with greed, competition, and violence.

The image of the moon is another hybrid symbol, one that is crucial to Muslim culture, which runs on a lunar calendar, and that is also crucial to many of Lorca's key works. According to Michel Gauthier (2010), the Lorquian moon "es un astro femenino pero estéril, que seduce pero que engaña y que lleva a la muerte a aquellos a quienes ella acoge" (90). Since Muslims also follow the phases of the moon in order to observe Ramadan, one of the five pillars of Islam, the poem seems to be hinting that the moon must be associated with some sort of personal and costly sacrifice that will not be pleasant. In this way, the moon symbolizes something that counteracts kindness (or "sweetness") in the form of bitterness, especially in the first two verses, in which the

moon is described as being sweet but also deceitful. By this reading, the poem is talking about expectations, and if one considers migration as a key theme in El Fathi's work, then it becomes evident that the poem is about the bitter experiences of migrants, whose expectations are not met when they move abroad. This, combined with the concluding verse "Jamás retorné a Andalucía," makes one consider that Spain can be conceived of as narrow-minded and xenophobic. The poem is quite bizarre in that it combines an imagery of water – with allusions to crying and to sea creatures – with a desert imagery. Perhaps this, too, is the root of the speaker's bitterness: crossing between two lands, from Morocco to Spain, and seeing the absolute gap that exists between the rich and the poor. It is as if there is no middle ground, nothing that exists outside of the painfully dry desert, a space that is so dry that the tears that are shed are not of wáter, but of mercury. On the other hand there is the wetness, the water, in which fish are the main inhabitants. In the end, the speaker sees only dryness and emptiness on land – perhaps indicative that when they are in Morocco and Spain, the only thing that one sees is poverty and a lack of future job opportunites, and the water in the sea. But the one thing they never see is a fertile landscape where there are opportunities, and economic vibrance. Even when in Spain, the migrant is often segregated and ghettoized because the neighborhoods are gentrified.

The evidence on segregation in Spain in the form of ghettoization can be found in scholarly literature that touches upon urban spaces at the end of the twentieth century. Gary Wray McDonogh, in a 1992 article titled "Bars, Gender, and Virtue," pointed out that for a time the *barrio chino*, or the Raval, was a space of segregation where Arabs and Africans would often live:

> Drug trafficking was associated with Arab and African immigrants, almost all male and many illegal, who concentrated in the Raval as an historic haven of immigration. Even bars that remained "clean" were heavily policed if frequented by Africans and Arabs. Associations of race and drugs also meant that some residents rejected these immigrants as harbingers of problems, while criticizing the "young middle-class women" who used them as companions and dealers. (25)

The same neighborhood continued to be portrayed as a ghetto for migrant citiznes in the faux documentary-style film *En construcción* (2001) and in Alejandro Iñárritu's *Biutiful* (2010). This sort of cultural and social desert, combined with the open hostilities from Spanish citizens, would certainly drive the poetic voice to the conclusion that all there is is the Mediterranean surrounded by lands where there is only poverty and hatred and a cycle of drugs, violence, and prostitution. Given that the poetry is written by a Moroccan, it would be obvious as to why a person would not return to Andalucía: a logical and feeling person would be much more inclined to suffer poverty in a land that at least treats them as if they are no different from the rest, and where their family is. By going to Andalucía, or really any part of Spain, one is exposed to a similar state of poverty, but without any proper social network on top of that. "Jamás retorné a Andalucía" is not just a verse that refers to resentment and bitterness. It is a perfectly understandable personal choice in a world where one's only choice is between a bad option and an even worse one.

In another poem, this border gnosis will lead the speaker to identify even more and more with the migrant subject:

Una muchacha encontró

el anillo

Se casó. Su novio se puso

el anillo

Emigró el novio.

Una muchacha encontró

en la playa

un anillo

una historia

una amarga travesía. (*Orilla* 53)

In this text, the word *anillo* floats off on its own, a sort of a visual representation of a person's remains, floating at sea. One observes the use of anaphora in this poem, lending to it a sort of affective intention, as if to recall a nostalgic memory. But the token of this memory, the ring, is playing with the idea of being both an insider and an outsider. If in other poems one finds eroticism, it could very well be a way of coping with the stresses of dealing with the deaths that occur at sea. If in the preceding poem the poetic voice wishes to become more involved with activism in favor of the migrants, in this poem a sobering question informs its content: how married to the cause of migration and human rights does one want to be? The repetition of the Spanish word for ring in the text is a classic manifestation of trauma, in this case it would appear to be the trauma of having

taken the issue of migration for serious for too long. So the poem appears to be questioning the ethics of activism, and to what degree a person should be willing to attach their life to social and political issues. In an interview with El Fathi, the author has made it clear that he cares deeply about immigration, but that he also does not want to be limited or labeled as being exclusively a social poet:

> no es una constante. El poeta en mi caso también escribe sobre el amor, el erotismo, la fantasia, y de cuestiones tan simples o tan mágicas como escribir sobre una cortina, porque me parece un tema muy poético escribir sobre la vida de una cortina, no? […] Parece que va adquiriendo vida propia. Esa cortina que trasmite, que refleja, que te impide, y al mismo tiempo que te protege…en fin, muchísimas cosas. Por lo tanto no es siempre una constante la denuncia del poeta. (Interview 26 Oct. 2012)

The author, even in the interview, employs an imagery of separation between himself and the outside social world, discussing a curtain that impedes you from doing certain things, as if to tell the reading public of the importance of taking a break and a respite from time to time. In this regard, there is a deep and profound humanness to El Fathi's work that recognizes, despite the human capacity for transcendence, the occasional need for personal borders in the form of boundaries, and specifically of boundaries that keep a human being from internally migrating too much, to the extent that they no longer think about their own domestic and private lives. It is a quandary that comes with caring burnout, when a person becomes too involved with the cause that they are advocating.

They later have problems separating themselves from it and then can never feel free. This, of course, is a vicious cycle, because if the activist is never able to release their mind from the work that they do, they end up no longer being able to serve as they once could, having hit an emotional wall. Instead of getting buried in an emotional quagmire that becomes too much to handle, the person selectively backs away and allows for some space between their responsibilities and their private life. Activism is and always has been emotionally engaging, but, practiced too much, it can for some be emotionally draining, as they do not fully recognize just how much of themselves they are giving. This is exactly what is happening to the bride in the poem, a poetic figure who represents activism and who no longer can separate herself from the past because she married the man who would later die while crossing the Mare Nostrum. In *Local Histories,* Mignolo may have written that a major goal "is to erase the distinction between the knower and the known, between a 'hybrid' object and a 'pure disciplinary or interdisciplinary subeject, uncontaminated by the border matter he or she describes" (18), but El Fathi's poetry is pointing out the precise risk that entails. It is possible that the bride in the poem was never able to let go of migrant-related tragedies because of that, because of the haunting of her husband's death that rattled what previously had been a sense of peace and harmony within.

With this in mind, it is almost as if his burial at sea had been her burial. But life must go on, and she cannot die with him, because for her life still offers other opportunities. Instead of seeing this poem as a defeatist song to those who would gladly fight for the rights of migrants, it would perhaps be a much more informed and nuanced

understanding of the text as being a warning to those who solely dedícate themselves to activism, with nothing else. In the end, the poet has given us a poem that advocates activism, sure, but so long as one never fully forgets to take part in their own self-care, as well. This is important for two reasons: (1) the person who occasionally puts up a wall or barrier between their activism and their life will be relatively less stressed, and (2) having rested their minds and their bodies, they will be ten-fold better-abled to help those in need, instead of falling away in exhaustion. The poem is somewhat moralistic in this fashion, as it gently warns the careful reader that activists should be careful in just how far they migrate into the question and problematics of migration, and the difficulty of returning to a sense of peace and well-being when they have constantly been venturing outside of themselves and for the sake of others for so long. Once the mind beomes engaged emotionally, it may be hard to shut off. To cross the mental border and threshold of minding one's own preoccupations and maintaining a certain semblance of sanity, to crossing over to the ultimate marriage to a life in fighting the good fight for migration, is nearly fatal. In the end, there is the risk that a person becomes a shell of themselves when they only fight for a cause that leaves them feeling more and more powerless. Perhaps this is the reason why El Fathi writes often about highly erotic material. It could be considered an unconscious strategy to keep a very fine but strong border between the world suffering (that is geographically also close to home) and a sense of general sanity. The border between those two mental realms is often quite narrower than we imagine, and no one fully knows how one will react to the constant reality of death, burial, and

indifference. By maintaining a modicum of control, El Fathi's poetic speaker reasserts their identity as a strong subject.

But the speaker's sense of self will be challenged. In the following poem, one observes a wounded masculine identity that mourns the loss of prestige in a world where Arab subjectivities are continually questioned and degraded:

[…]

Tetuán llora tu huida,

empuña su flor y ¡Grita!

[…]

En mi piel tus muros,

[…]

Te busco…

Eres tal vez un sueño:

"Abderrahman III, sacó su pluma

y te hirió, sólo te queda un corazón".

Erótico sueño, pero malvada pluma

aquella que te traspasó.

[…]

los pura sangre te añoran

la ternura de tus hierbas,

tus estrellas, tus ardientes lágrimas.

Llorabas de alegría,

Joven princesa árabe.

¿Por qué lloras?

[…]

y la fuente, Abderrahman

te añora, su espíritu vive en Tetuán. (*Orilla* 25-26)

The poetic voice uses "tu" as a personified address to the once Andalusí city of Córdoba, which has since broken away from the Maghreb and has become officially part of Spain. The text, despite this split between Iberia and North Africa, retains a reading that falls in line with Mignolo's border gnosis. Since part of what Mignolo is describing is an ideal world where people/activists/scholars engage with thoughts that take them beyond the simple here and now, so that they imagine how the here could be like other spaces, or how the there could be like here, in this poem we are witnessing a poetic voice that imagines an idealized past, where life seemed better. The voice displaces himself from the problematic sociopolitical realities of the present in order to place himself into the past era. This is very different from Spain in general, which has avoided its connections to a very specific past. But the fact that Spain evades certain elements of its African and/or Semitic history is a tacit admission to what Delgado called earlier the "split consciousness," that is its historically liminal relationship to the rest of Europe, or what Hegel might have called the "heart of Europe" – Germany, France, and England. Elena Delgado has identified, at nearly the same time that López García began to write about an "ethnic filter" discourse, a tendency in Spain towards wanting to minimize its

difference from the rest of Europe, one that has intensified at the turn of the twenty-first century:

> Y en efecto desde las lamentaciones de los artistas en el siglo XVII, hasta los más recientes artículos de opinion en la prensa española actual, se extiende toda una corriente de pensamiento centrada en cuestionar, afirmar o, más recientemente, negar, la "diferencia" española respecto a otras naciones y sobre todo respecto a otras naciones europeas. ("La nación deseada" 207)

This rhetoric of cultural difference, and of Spain's cultural difference from the rest of Europe, undermines Spain's claims that Moroccan migrants are culturally unable to adapt to Western culture, and that they come from a diametrically opposed culture that cannot handle opening up and relating in a dynamic way amongst other cultures, attitudes and mentalities. The general idea among Spanish intellectuals such as Mikel Azurmendi, Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, and Serafín Fanjul is that the Arab world is an unchanging region and that all its people are exactly the same, and that they cannot interpret their lives on their own terms, informed by their own personal experiences and social realities.

Perhaps most unique verse in the poem is verse 13, where the poetic voice observes "En mi piel tus muros." But upon closer examination, this verse contains an understandable logic, if one looks at the historical situation in modern current affairs between Spain and Morocco. If Morocco was a Spanish colony for a greater part of the first half of the twentieth century, then the allusion to walls seems to be a description of colonial infrastructure in the Maghreb. If the mention of Córdoba in the poem is more

than just a personification of a city and is also a sort of metonym for Spain in the modern sense, then the wall could be the colonial edifice and all its conceits. In the final verses, the poet cleverly places himself in the poem, although he makes it seem as though it is innocently just the historical Abderrahman III: "y la fuente, Abderrahman/te añora, su espíritu vive en Tetuán" (v. 43-44). In a not-so-subtle fashion, there is a diegetic Abderrahman El Fathi posing as the modern reincarnation of the former Caliph of Córdoba during the time of al-Andalus. Aspiring to a better reality, the current Abderrahman knows that his life has been shaped irreversably by the Spanish Protectorate and European colonialism. He himself is a product edified and produced by colonialism in the midst of Northern Morocco.

Feeling weakened and emasculated by the modern relationship between the two Mediterranean countries, in which Spain has all the riches and Morocco is reduced to a economic wasteland, where there are nearly no job opportunities, the modern Tetouani dreams of a time when his prestige and power were much more: "Te busco…/Eres tal vez un sueño:/"Abderrahman III, sacó su pluma/y te hirió, sólo te queda un corazón"./Erótico sueño, pero malvada pluma/aquella que te traspasó" (v. 19-24). Here, the poetic voice, weak at the present time, in late twentieth-century Morocco, recalls a past glory. He indirectly reveals the low regard by which Morocco is seen in the contemporary world, paralleling the sentiments of Mohamed Chakor, who in the Moroccan weekly *La mañana* wrote that the Arab world is caught in "las garras del colonialismo" ("Homenaje Árabe"). The inclination to recall a glorious past recalls Mignolo's assertion that "[t]he distinctive histories, cultural achievements, and unique sensibility are celebrated; at the same time,

connotations of inferiority, or residual assumptions of subordination are erased" (*The Darker Side* 49). The dream sequence in the poem is violent, sexual, and problematic: it contains the disturbing images of a man who feels stifled by his own contemporary socio-political situation and thus can only live free in his mind's eye, but not in the public space of Morocco. The disturbing aspect is that the subject (a personified Tetouan) appears to want to sexuallydominate another entity (in this case, the personified Córdoba) in order to prove North African capacity for power and prestige. That is, he is free to travel so long as it is only in his head. To any other extent he is impotent, or at least feels as such. The imagination incites feelings of anger and this imagination is what inspires physical action: this is why thoughts are so dangerous, and why domesticating one's thought processes can help to domesticate one's actions. Maybe this is why El Fathi puts his poetry to paper: restless to act, unsatisfied with simply thinking wild and uncontrolled thoughts, he finds a medium that serves as a go-between between the two. But then this becomes an issue: by writing, does he keep himself from acting?

The poem is responding to the discourse that all Moroccan men are oppressively abusive to women. Yet it appears that the speaker is aware that this is a trap, and that it is this colonially patriarchal and dismissive point of view that has fomented a consciousness framed by masculinity: his dream represents a subconscious desire to return to an order in which Moroccan men are again at the apogee of power. The dream and the allusion to a distant past serve to emphasize a longing for the recovery of a lost imperial past. In this sense the poem may be an allusion to the sense of impotence and frustration found in Mustafa al-Misnawi's short story "Tariq, aquel que no conquistó al-Andalus" (*Cuentos*

de las dos orillas 2001). Both texts involve a contemporary namesake of famous Arab historical figures from the North African past (Abderrahman and Tariq, respectively).

The wall that the poetic voice refers to is also a personal psychological wall that is keeping the speaker from venturing outside of his comfortable space of powerlessness, which only requires that he remain listless. To a certain extent, the speaker has surrendered himself to the comfort of familiarity and mediocrity, instead of challenging himself: it also becomes evident that he has buried a sense of inferiority deep down within his subconscious, and these dreams bring the pain, and the sense of loss of power, that he has buried away, even from himself. Why join the dissidents, why submit oneself to the razor's edge that is the border zone, when one can sit back and quaintly fantasize about something safe? The static, eternal images of the Arab Levant, and of a crying princess in the second half of the poem in verses 27-38 ("Buscan tu flor sin tempestades […] del palacio del sultan"), are both a Western image of the Orient but they also serve as a lullabye as opposed to sharp and direct social action. The poetic voice is able to self-medicate, afraid of its own potential and sense of responsibility to society and anything even resembling self-respect. The Orientalist image of an exotic and cardboard-thin representation of the Middle East, with an almost Aladdinesque feel to it, is the speaker's strategy for deploying the Romantic Spanish vision of Muslim Spain, so as to comfort Spaniards about their African history. The poem is as much about a break up as it is about making sure that Moroccan subjects are not seen as abject subjects, especially in the context of increased migration at the turn of the millennium. Since there is the tendency in Spain to idealize al-Andalus as a period of positivity and of general sociopolitical

harmony among the "la España de las tres religiones" (Castro 41) the speaker employs this imagery as a way to prevent the condescending attitudes that are often given to present-day Moroccan migrants in Spain (Solé and Parella 2003). Alexander E. Elinson observes that many texts use a selective imagery of al-Andalus "in order to satisfy contemporary needs and to feed modern imaginations" (3). In this case, El Fathi's choice to use Orientalist imagery is a deliberate deployment of Spain's Romantic image of Muslim Spain, and he engages it to distance Spaniards away from the unpleasant ideas they have about modern-day migrants who work and live on the Peninsula. He takes the color green, a color used in both Muslim architecture and visual artwork, and combines it with the Lorquian use of the color.

In Lorca's work, the color green is associated principally with two completely different poles: life and death. In terms of life, green is the color of fertility, and is associated with a robust rebirth, as in spring time, when the grass and the trees grow. However, green is also associated with death, such as in the death of the Gypsy's girlfriend in "Romance sonámbulo." In this particular poem, green becomes a Lorquian symbol of life and fertility, thereby giving the text a positive interpretation.[27] The motive behind this use of color is El Fathi's intention of creating the image that Moroccan migrants can contribute to the growth of the Spanish economy and to a richer, and fuller, cultural life, such as in the arts and in music. El Fathi has spoken on migrants and their potential contributions to Spain:

[27] The color green also refers to the dead lover in the poem.

> Ahora el inmigrante viene a trabajar para crear mas riqueza en España. Y al mismo tiempo está ayudando a mejorar la economía española. No está llegando a robar ni puestos de trabajo ni intentar cambiar la cultura ni imponer su cultura. Al contrario, viene en busca de una vida mejor, enriqueciendo la vida española, hablando en particular de la inmigración marroquí en España. (Interview 26 Oct. 2012)

The use of the imagery of *cuchillos* in verse 12 has to do with the speaker's fear that Spain will try to figuratively cut its ties with the migrants, and so while the imagery is similar to the *navajas* in much of Lorca's work, El Fathi does not use it in the traditional Lorquian sense (in which the knives symbolize fertilization, as in the sense of a phallus, and death in the form of violent deaths) but rather to his own devices. That is, El Fathi's employment of the knife imagery that is especially common in his *Romancero gitano* collection of poetry functions more to emphasize separation and division. The commonality, then, would be that the knife symbols in both poets' work tend to signify loss of some sort or another.

The sense of a buried self, or consciousness, as explored in the first poem that we examined in the chapter is brought up again in the following poem. Here too, one sees the use of the imagery of a wedding ring, and of a divided relationship between two lovers:

> Te busqué por todos los rincones
>
> […]
>
> El viento me trajo tu camisa

Y sigo buscando

Te enterraron

[…]

Las gaviotas trajeron tu anillo

[…]

Mojo mis manos en el mar

Siento tus caricias

[…]

Me ahogué en el mar

Y sigo buscando. (51)

It is not until the reader has read this poem a few times that it becomes apparent that the dead body that the speaker is referring to is his own, or at least could be his own. In this case, the body that the speaker is looking for is both other and familiar. From the speaker's perspective, the dead cadaver is his own, even as it is someone else's. A certain Split-consciousness comes to the surface in the water as the speaker, looking for what he believes to be someone else, comes to understand that his search was redundant. The use of apostrophe in the text is misleading, because the poem actually turns out to be addressed to the speaker her/himself. Since the text goes from the indirect object pronoun "te" to the first-person subject pronoun (implicitly) in "Me ahogué en el mar," we see a unique melding of two bodies into one: or at least a division between bodies dissolving, so that there is no longer a distinction. The poem is eager to suggest that border thinking becomes quite natural once a person stops categorizing and begins to connect the dots on

how interrelated one person's death is to another person's life. Mignolo, continuing with his explicit breakdown of what border gnosis consists of, writes that the key is "thinking from dichotomous concepts rather than ordering the world in dichotomies" (85). The poetic voice describes dichotomous concepts but is connecting the implications of censorship, doubt, unorthodox thought, and the consequences (and even the arbitrary definition) of being a "traitor" in any particular geohistorical location. This makes verse 6 quite interesting for the reading of the poem ("El viento me trajo tu camisa"). A shirt has a huge connotation for political partisanship and for identity politics, especially in post-World War II Europe, but also in the Arab world. For example, it Italy there were Mussolini's Black Shirts; in Hitler's Germany there were the Brown Shirts; and in Spain there were the Falange-affiliated "Camisas nuevas" and the "Camisas Viejas." The fact that the speaker describes her/himself as being the object of the verb ("me trajo"), the emphasis on wind ("El viento") and political identity ("tu camisa") suggests that politics is capricious, and only follows those who have the most power. But the wind is also suggestive of change, hinting that the person who died was not an economic migrant, at least not primarily, but a person who questioned power, who questioned the status quo, and who was seduced, perhaps, by the alleged freedoms up north so that from there he could create and foment the beginnings of change. But when a subversive thinker dies, something happens to the collective environment, and it may not be for more than a few years, or it might be for several decades, but the milieu changes, and for that period of time, however long it may be, others who have had similar impure thoughts, or thoughts of questioning procedures and hierarchies, are brought down, and drown in spirit with the

wo/man who lost their life at sea.

The alliteration that occurs in verses 14-15 ("Mojo mis manos en el mar/Siento tus caricias") hint at a sense of peace, if not at the death (which would actually cause great grief), then at the fact that with life dies not ideas, but the will to fight for them, and to articulate them in writing, speech, and thought. At the very middle of the poetic text, one finds the verse "te enterraron" (v. 8) by itself. The burial is of the charismatic other, or perhaps the quietly subversive neighbor who teaches his/her neighbors how to think about the regime, or perhaps how to rethink gender relations; but in the end, "te" becomes each person at one point, when they are buried in legal trouble for having publicly banded together with others, or for having introduced reading material that begins to ask important questions about sexuality, race, and class. The calming sound of the repeated 's' phoneme, or the repeated nasality of the 'm' sound, causes the reading public, if reading the poem aloud, to walk away from the poem feeling more peaceful than upon first reading it. This sense of peace comes from the acceptance of fate because the poetic voice, apostrophizing the other as "te," comes to realize that the other is a sort of split self, and that in death there is a certain freedom. Even the waves, in verse 4, begin to rest. One could conjecture that since at the end of the poem the speaker learns that the dead remains s/he was looking for was all along their own person, the peace that the poem hints at is due to the speaker accepting, for once, the fate of the person who hates the idea of fate. The paradox of you/I begins to make sense, as the subject who seeks a life of freewill, no longer bound by tradition and family blood, begins to accept that, in their search for happiness or for a fuller life, they may die. It is the power of knowing that

you will accept your freedom and your search for alternatives at all costs, even at the expense of risking your own personal safety.

If in the previous poem the focus was on the sea and water, in the next poem analysis, one can observe that earth and land become prioritized. In the following poem, Lorca actually appears in the text. His diegetic appearance seems to dialogue with the idea of burying the dichotomy between the ground and the sky. There is a general idea of vertical movement, starting at the ground level and then moving up. Here is the text, titled "Poema en 15 versos de trágica Vida de poeta enamorado":

> Se asoma Lorca en la oscura
> ciudad de Tetuán,
> y en el balcón de sus labios
> trepan versos de verde primavera,
> y al alcanzar el aire
> […] quejíos de Camarón
> entre el silencio impuesto
> por la sangre de la Novia.
> […] una Madre suspiraba
> en lo más hondo de su Tierra. (*Orilla* 17)

Here we have not burial, but unburial. Something is coming undone, and then released into the atmosphere, into the milieu of the Moroccan city of Tetouan. But the source, the origin of that which is put into the air, comes from the soil. Here the speaker is attempting to appeal to a sense of origins, and s/he is trying to explore the source of

human origin, which is from the ground. If the earth is personified as the "Madre" as in verse 13, then the voice that rises into the air (especially verses 3-8: "y en el balcón de sus labios...marcaba quejíos de Camarón") represents the trajectory of any *cante jondo*[28] song that is sung with *duende*, or soul. This sense of melancholic soul, so central to the expression of *duende*, is appropriate in its association with, as María Cristina Assumma observes, "the experience of imprisonment, […] love, death, betrayal" (211). Lorca himself, in a famous lecture known as the "Juego y teoría del duende," has linked the *duende* and its heart-wrenching rendition with a certain culture of death unique to Spain.[29] This is what underlies the singing that occurs in verses 3-4 ("y en el balcón de sus labios/ trepan versos de verde primavera"). These verses are Lorca's singing on behalf of those who, because they do not belong to the symbolic world of colonial Spain, cannot be heard. The death in El Fathi's poem is not literal; it is cultural. The poem is the portrayal of a signifying culture, the Spanish one, that has erased nearly all vestiges of African culture, and that no longer has the will to listen to or to acknowledge that which contributed so heavily to its own current well-being. The lack of a dialogue between the two Mediterranean shores, north and south, is what the diegetic Lorca figure is lamenting. He is lamenting the lack of a mother culture, a voice that has been erased from history. As Eduardo Subirats would have it,

> Desde su fundación histórica, en 1492, hasta el día de hoy, la identidad nacional se ha configurado a fuerza de desechar, muchas

[28] Andalusian deep song.
[29] Lorca writes, regarding the cult of death in Spain, "Muchas gentes viven allí entre muros hasta el día en que mueren y las sacan al sol. Un muerto en España está más vivo como muerto que en ningún sitio del mundo." ("Juego y teoría" 156)

> veces con virulenta violencia, cualquier forma de reflexión sobre la destrucción de las lenguas históricas, y los cultos y culturas que poblaron la Península ibérica. (39)

The mother, thrown out from history and from geopolitical importance, is a cultural and formative presence of which El Fathi is becoming ever more cognizant. As Kristeva writes in her essay on *The Powers of Horror*:

> A certain 'ego' that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. Without a sign (for him), it beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out. To each ego its object, to each superego its abject. (2)

If before the relation between Spain and Morocco has been buried, especially at opportune times such as when the Peninsula joined the EU in the 1980s, here the intertwined relationship betweent he two countries comes up from the political grave to which it was sent. Resurrected in spirit and in its violently melancholy expression, the *cante jondo* acknowledges in pain the separation of Morocco and Spain from the times of al-Andalus to the present. Unable to reconcile this open wound, the abject mother culture is able to seep through, as evident in the poem, where the mother's voice travels through the bodies of both Lorca and Camarón.

The corporealities of the two artists serve as Andalusian mediums for the raw energy and will of the mother, who cries out for a son that is culturally distancing himself

from her, and seeking out a way of getting closer to his yearned-for Spain. The gap between mother and son is to familial relations what the relation is between Morocco and Spain. There seems to be a relation to the ever-growing separation between the two continents and the poet from his own mother, a likely a Moroccan woman who did not speak Spanish: in both cases a painful wound festers, an injury that is due to a lack, a huge gap of emptiness that separates the one from the other. The symbolic power of coloniality and the sway of Spanish culture and civilization causes subjects to move away from what was once their mother culture, in El Fathi's case, Arab/Berber culture. One advantage of siding with Spanish culture is the prestige it has in making a person seem more respectable, and even "better" than others. This is problematic because of course the Spanish language and culture is not superior to other cultural and linguistic practices. But here we are approximating the colonial difference between one realm and another, between what is Spanish and what is Moroccan. Mignolo observes that "Once coloniality of power is introduced into the analysis, the "colonial difference" becomes visible, and the […] geopolitic of knowledge becomes a powerful concept to avoid the Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism and to legitimize border epistemologies emerging from the wounds of colonial histories, memories, and experiences (37)." Morocco is presented as being a major influence on Spain, and not just the other way around.

The discourse of colonial paternalism is inverted, and one sees Africa as a source of culture and civilization, not a satellite of it. The words in verses 9-11 ("entre el silencio impuesto/por la sangre de la Novia. / La voz silenciada en su cielo") are an obvious allusion to *Bodas*. The reference to blood also emphasizes the death of the two men in

Bodas to the unnecessary death of two families considered very different, but united in many of their interests. In this regard Morocco is one family and Spain is the other. The "Madre" represents their once-unified territory, now separated by Spain's desire to bury its African past and connections. The poem is deliberately drawing attention to sound and its explosion from the soil up in order "to listen again to those voices and concerns that were buried under 'noble' intellectual global designs that were deconstructing Occidentalism from within and from the center of knowledge production" (330). Yet the poem contradicts Mignolo's critique that non-Western languages (such as Arabic) should be prioritized by Moroccans for protest over Castilian Spanish, for if the voices raised in favor of supporting a shared Spain-Morocco space are successful in being heard, it is precisely because they are sung in a familiar European language, what Mignolo himself referred to as "one of the three major languages of modernity" (330). In this case, it is assumed by the poetic voice that a major language of modernity, one in which the problems of the world can be made more widely known, is Castilian Spanish. Mignolo talks about the many languages of modernity being English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Channeling themselves as mediums for the release of *duende*, Lorca and Camarón become transmitters of an anguished border zone. In this text, *cante jondo* becomes the lingua franca for transmitting the suffering that migrants go through when they cross the Mediterranean. The violent sound, associated with having something or someone very nearly taken out and away from one's heart, is one of mourning loss.

1.2 *Mundialización*, Subalternity, and The Levant

Admidst the mourning of loss, the temptation would be to slowly descend into a state of despair and absolute pessimism. However, if one were to personally become acquainted with the poet himself, and if one were to read further into El Fathi's anthology, it is perhaps better to say that the poet is an optimistic pessimist, or a cautious optimist. In the following text El Fathi paints an imagery of hope with his choice of words:

> Al Andalus brindó sus aires de Primavera
> a una lluvia de Oriente
> sus jinetes recorrían el firmamento
> hasta alcanzar sus minaretes,
> Iglesias y sinagogas,
> apareció un olivo de burbujas ensangrentadas
> en sus entrañas
> […] (183)

The imagery recalls the trope in Lorca's oeuvre, mainly in *El romancero gitano*, in which the subaltern gypsy population is persecuted by the Guardia Civil and other authorities, and therefore the characters are often living life on the run: this nomadic life includes living a life that enables movement, such as the life of a rider on the back of a horse. Additionally, this poem uses the Lorquian imagery of olive trees and blood to emphasize that bloodshed and violence must stop so that Spain can again potentially experience, and enjoy, an environment of tolerance and harmony such as that supposedly experienced during the period that Castro called "la España de las tres culturas." Hence

the mention of the "minaretes,/Iglesias y sinagogas" as being in one single space.

We have an anti-Enlightenment poem here, in the sense that the party that is going to introduce this pluralistic form of peace is not going to be some European-led task force, such as the U.N. or NATO, but rather partially by the Arab world, and specifically by the Mediterranean region that covers both Spain and Morocco. This idea of a locally-led movement for peace and pluralization strongly resembles what Mignolo talks about when he discusses the crucial distinction between *mundialización* and *globalization.* The latter refers to a raw "mercantilism" (*Local Histories/ Global Designs* 279) and "is attached to a Christian mission" (279) that seeks to dominate other cultures and the cost of those cultures' livelihoods. Drawing from the disastrous designs of globalization and its ties to contemporary neocolonialism in countries from Morocco to Iraq, El Fathi's poetry engages positively with Mignolo's understanding of *mundialización* as a healthy and much-needed example of how "local histories" can de-center hegemony by recognizing the unjustness of the West's "cosmographic division of the globe, mixed with the modern colonial/colonial East/West distinction" (280) . In El Fathi's work, one sees the hope and conviction that the reconciliation of cultures across the Mediterranean, and the healing of that wound, could heal the much greater wounds that are dividing the planet in other regions, be it in Northern Ireland, the two Sudans, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the battle between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, and so forth. In the poem the speaker states that "Al Andalus brindó sus aires de Primavera/a una lluvia de Oriente/sus jinetes recorrían el firmamento" in the first three verses. The subtle suggestion is that it could possibly be the Arab world that could help bring peace to the

world, first through improving its relations with Iberia, and then with the rest of the planet's countries.

The consistent enjambment in the poem, where one verse runs on right into the next one, suggests that there is a continuity that runs from the philosophies of Castro, who advocated for an open and pluralistic Spain, to Lorca, and then fast-forwarding to the present, in the contemporary era of El Fathi. All three authors search for a region that focuses more on its commonalities than on its differences.

The use of the imagery of *primavera* is also strategic: while at present (2016) many would associate a Moroccan poet writing of the spring with a possible reference to the Arab Spring of 2011, one must recall that the *Orilla* anthology was published much earlier, in 2004, and is a compilation of poetry that itself was written earlier. Nonetheless, the Spanish word conjures images and associations of fertility. Which brings us to the color green, a color Lorca used very often in his poetics, because for him, green could often be read as fertility.[30] Combining a Spanish understanding of fertility along with an Andalusí consciousness of harmony among the three Abrahamic religions creates the possible reading of the poem as indicating that the Orient, in this case the entire MENA region, need not be thought of in terms of violence and war, but rather as a peace-loving area just like anywhere else.

The poem is both hopeful and pessimistic: on the one hand, it presents

[30] Adela in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* often wears green. The youngest in the household, and the most attractive, he persona is often associated with sexuality and fertility in the Lorquian oeuvre. Rupert Allen has read into the color green in Lorquian literature as being a chthonic symbol, that is, an organic representation of both life (fertility) *and* death (in the decomposition of dying bodies). For more information, see Allen's investigation "An analysis of Narrative and Symbol in Lorca's *Romance sonámbulo*" (*Hispanic Review* 36.4: 1968), starting on p. 345.

presumably Arabo-Islamic horseriders as arriving into Spain with aspirations of plurality and respect. Yet, on the darker side, it appears as if a cynical world, intolerant of anyone trying to bring optimism into the landscape, has allowed for sufficient violence to occur such that the riders are killed by an olive branch in their attempt to bring peace. It is as if the attempt was there, but that the world was not ready for acceptance and for multiculturalism. This is the significance behind verses 6-7 ("apareció un olivo de burbujas ensangrentadas/en sus entrañas"), and the fact that violence continues despites efforts to the contrary, explains the reference to *nácar*, or mother-of-pearl in verse 9. Coming from the inside of seashells that often spiral about in fascinating forms, the poem alludes fatalistically to the world's undue fascination to spirals of violence. In this single instance, strangeness and unfamiliarity can be incredibly subversive, because the poem is saying that humankind finds pleasure in the familiar, and even becomes militarized in the pleasurable rhythms of violence that drown out the uncomfortable reality of humanity's own guilt in supporting violence – whether that be in keeping silent, in continuing to depend upon affordable gasoline, or in microaggressions against people who wear the veil or the djellaba.

Falling from grace, humanity finds comfort in the "naturalness" of violence, and those who wish for peace are left in an uncomfortable solitude, rebelling against the masses and this so-called violent nature. The strange logic of violence, the world's apologetic attitude towards it, is shut down in the following poem, where military symbols and vehicles- tanks –are stopped in their tracks by a child, and then later the same tanks begin to dance:

[…]

Gritaba la locura

Entre el clamor de un sueño.

Danzas del vientre

Tras un tanque Rosado

Bailaban en todas las esquinas

Se lanzaban nubes de azufre

Para suavizar la noche,

Y esa noche, maldito amanecer

En Belén,[31] lloraba sal rocosa

Aquella niña, y continuaba

La Danza Oriental del Tanque. (165)

It is the disappointment in the banality of violence in the Middle East that is being described vividly in this poetic text. The disappointment in a violence that leads to the disappearing and reappearing colonialities, in the form of Israeli Zionist settlements, or in the form of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf and in other Arab states. Here the constant violence in Palestine becomes a mirror. A shattered mirror of a self left abandoned, a body that has become a machine and has lost all resonance with its surroundings and any sense of self-possession. By this regard, the dancing tank has regained its inner life, animated by the will to song that has been emanated in the streets of Palestine.

In the words "Gritaba la locura/ Entre el clamor de un sueño" (v. 4-5) a

[31] *Belén* is the Spanish name for the West Bank town known in English as Bethlehem.

dissonance manifests itself, in the split between a trance that is induced through a feeling of *duende*, on the one hand, and the violence of a town being pacified, ie, violently shot at, be they by Israeli Defense Force troops, or, in a veiled criticism, the neocolonization by U.S. troops in nearby Levantine nations such as Iraq. The barrel of the tank gun is the root of the *locura* that was yelling, a euphemism for violently and indiscriminately spraying bullets all over the town. The irony that such acts of military intrusion can happen in a space that supposedly marks the birth of Jesus- Belén –is met with the ultimate subversion. An army of grown men from the world's most financially wealthy military is stopped by a young girl who hypnotizes with her own invocation of the Oriental Tank Dance.

Victims of their own internalization of Orientalism, the Western troops, most of whom are likely Israeli soldiers, are hypnotized by this well-known exotic Western fantasy, the belly dance. But it is also incredibly positive for all concerned, for, instead of opening fire, the tanks themselves, in a reversal of realist logic, contained by the extremes of positivism, begin to dance. The power of the feminine stops the tanks in their mission to pacify the town, and stops them from potentially shooting and killing innocent civilians. This hypnotism, similar to *duende*, is something with which Lorca was familiar, and it is also something that is well known in parts of the Arab world, especially in Syria: the Arabic word is *tarab*, and it is very similar to *duende.* With *tarab,* particular sounds cause audiences to feel a sort of extasy, and they open up in ways that they normally would not, dancing, swaying, even crying. It is the moment when human subjects can truly feel the music, and it is when, in terms of vibration, the barrier between the artist

and the audience is dissolved. Here, though, *tarab* has a particular effect on the intruding army, and it also speaks volumes for future change in the Middle East. After all, the person causing the cessation of the arrival of foreign troops is a girl. She has used the familiar trope of belly dancing to enter the game of decolonization: it worked. As Jean Baudrillard writes, "The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it […] it is the map that precedes the territory" ("The Precession of Simulacra" 1557). Being a little girl, she could use her perceived innocence to get troops to stop passing through the town. After all, who would shoot an innocent child? This self-consciousness of realizing her social worth in a given moment has given her time to dance, and to unexpectedly get the tanks in rhythm with her gyrations. An entire army changes step, and, under the spell of the belly dance, the seemingly impossible occurs. The tanks themselves begin to to dance. Some would object to this interpretation, yet this is the beauty of the poetic text: it is a safe poetic space that the poet can use that goes beyond reality, such that readers often know and expect to suspend their own disbelief.

The play with darkness and light in the poem, perhaps not quite obvious at first, works intertextually with the "Romance sonámbulo" poem, in which the drunken Guardia Civil authorities knock on the doors of the gypsies' house. The original verses in the Lorquian poem are as follows: "La noche se puso íntima/ como una pequeña plaza./ Guardias civiles borrachos/ en la puerta golpeaban" (v. 79-82). The reference is to the night slowly transitioning into day, and the shadow cast by the house slowly disappears and gets smaller and smaller ("la noche se puso íntima/ como una pequeña plaza") as the

sun comes out and rises.[32] In El Fathi's text, a similar passage indicating a dawning age and the end of darkness (v. 9-12 "Se lanzaban nubes de azufre/Para suavizar la noche,/Y esa noche, maldito amanecer/En Belén, lloraba sal rocosa") indicates that a new era is potentially in store for the MENA region, which in retrospect could have been a foreshadowing of the Arab Spring of 2010-11. The dawn of a new day, marked by the disappearing night, implies that symbolically the young girl has been successful in initiating a new revolution, or perhaps movement, for Arab subjects to claim their autodetermination and their own course for autonomy, progress, and decision-making. Rather than give in to a masculinist discourse, the poem subverts stereotypes in the West that the Arab World is exclusively a patriarchal region and where women have no rights and no agency. Instead, a peaceful revolution for change begins with the dancing rhythms of a brave young girl who had the courage to face down the tanks of imperialist and neocolonial power. The Enlightenment discourse of the West bringing light and illumination to the East is inverted, with the latter becoming the source of change. The teleology that Hegel predicted is disrupted by a version of history that dares to impede the march of an exclusive and Eurocentric idea of progress.

The idea of a dawning period, and of a new start, is also prevalent in the following text, which makes explicit references to Lorca's poem "Romance de la pena negra," and is based around the Lorquian poem's central protagonist, Soledad Montoya. Lorca thought of Soledad as "la raíz del pueblo andaluz" (*Poema del cante jondo* 114) and as a woman who celebrated love but who was simultaneously aware that death lurked just

[32] Such an interpretation of Lorca's poem is based upon Michel Gauthier's reading of the text (*Poesía y realidades* 108).

around the corner. Here is El Fathi's text:

> La soledad de Lorca
>
> La misma soledad de Montoya
>
> Sí, era la misma pena
>
> Dibujada en carmín
>
> Cuando amanecía en Jericó
>
> ¡qué pena subía por las calles de Belén! (181)

Here we see the continuity, the suffering that Montoya feels as a result of being alone, her "pena negra." Perhaps one of the reasons Soledad Montoya feels so alone, at least in the Lorquian text, is because she is suffering the pain of not being romantically involved with anyone. This absence includes the lack of sexual love, and the vitality associated with lust. The reference to the pain that walks up along the streets of Belén[33] in the final verse is a possible reference to the 2000 Intifada, an insurrection of Arab protest against the pain and poverty induced by the Israeli bombardments of the Palestinian territories, as well as the spreading of settlements throughout.

The poem problematizes desire as both a catalyst for change and also as a distraction that functions to abate interest in furthering along any particular social or political cause. The complex and layered reference to maroon-colored lipstick in the fourth verse thus becomes readable as an expression of the violence carried out in the name of nationalistic interests, be they Israeli or Palestinian. In verses 3-5, one reads of lust, certainly, but also of the explosive nature of lust, both in the sense of the sexual

[33] Belén is, in English, known as the city of Bethlehem.

narrative, as well as in the sense of actual bombs going off and killing human lives. When the poetic voice states that "Sí, era la misma pena/ Dibujada en carmín/Cuando amanecía en Jericó," the verses that at first signify lust also can be understood as the pain of seeing blood drawn on the buildings and the streets of Jericho.[34]

Love can incite lustful passion or it can also function as a sort of inspiration to fight for justice due to one's passion, or due to the energy that is released when passions are stirred. It seems as though the the poetic voice is referring to a positive vantage point no matter what: in a volatile region like the Middle East, the diminishing of passions might be, temporarily, a very positive development. A poetic composition such as this must be very difficult for an Arab/Berber author such as El Fathi to write, because while he appears to be pro-Palestinian, his poetry indicates an underlying skepticism to the idea that any one side should be win it all. In a world of manichaean perspectives where political solutions can only be one way or another, the beauty in El Fathi's rendition of Lorquian poetics is expressed in Montoya's underlying desire to take a situation that is so seemingly simple (ie, one in which subjects have the tendency to align themselves as being pro-Israeli or pro-Palestine) and is desireous of problematizing the supposed two-sidedness of the affair.

In other words, Montoya, because of her sexuality, has decided to cloud her own enslavement to a manichaean view of world affairs by embracing desire. Were she to desire nothing perhaps her outlook toward the Middle East debacle would be clearer in terms of subscribing to the pro-Israeli/pro-Palestinian binary. But the poem can be read as

[34] Also known as Jericho, in the Palestinian West Bank. In fact, both Bethlehem and Jericho are located in the West Bank.

subtly insinuating that there are not only two positions to take on the crisis in the Occupied Territories. The poem, even as it gently undermines binary thinking, also seems to hint at the limits of human objectivity, as a person who is aware that what occurs in Belén is a tragedy, nonetheless she would still take the company of a Jew regardless. The complexity of the situation allows for a questioning of priorities: is religion more important than nationality? If so, does nationality even matter? But if a person is Arab and Islamic and lives within Israel and loves a Jew, isn't that being a traitor? Love can be potentially frightening because it threatens to bend one's political ideologies, and it could even corrupt them. But love could also function to awaken us to the blind allegiance we have to left- or right-wing politics: the allegiance often goes beyond logic to a nostalgic longing for place and group adherence. The dilemma comes to a raw observation made by one of the subjects filmed in the 2015 documentary film *Oriented*, a film about Palestinians raised in Israel who end up falling in love with Israelis: "If there will ever be a Palestinian state, or a state for everyone, I don't know if I'll feel like I belong." The quote captures the complexities of ideology, self-perception, the dogma of nationality, and the reality that nobody can control anything when it comes to the human emotion of love, one's experience with sexuality, and even relationships. The power of lust, love, and desire to destroy hegemonic forms of thought is so totalizing that a person who understands tragedy and perhaps even the cause of the tragedy (Israeli IDF) can still love Israelis by separating them from the military industrial complex. This has enormous implications for the immigration debate in Spain, and I would argue that this is why El Fathi put a Lorquian twist to it: the idea behind the poem is that one must separate the

person from the community that they are associated with.

While the group dynamics will play an important influence, one cannot truly understand an individual from a certain culture until they understand the person themselves, in their own context. The fact that a Muslim Moroccan poet is able to write a poem that questions nationalist allegiances from both sides (while still maintaining a certain pro-Palestinian position) indicates that the "cultural difference" discourse in Spain is completely out of line. If Spaniards begin to actually meet up, sit down, and have lunch with Moroccan migrants and their families, they would no longer lump them together with anti-Western Islamic terrorists like ISIS or Osama Bin Laden. The latter are groups and individuals that have definitely decided that they cannot get along with Western culture, including Spain: unfortunately, these groups have lent credence and plausibility to Samuel Huntington's fallacious ideas in his "The Clash of Civilizations" (1993), a piece of writing that also has much in common with the "ethnic filter" discourse that Bernabé López García identified in 2002. But that is a decision they, the Islamic extremists, have made, and it has created disastrous results for the world, and for an Arab region whose majority wants absolutely nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. El Fathi's poetry is subtly driving home the point that Arab-Islamic subjectivities are cut from different cloths, and that not all are the same: many enjoy Spanish culture, Israeli culture, and embrace taboo elements such as the LGBTQ culture. Some occasionally listen to heavy metal music,[35] which is *haram*[36] in orthodox Islam. But that is precisely

[35] A case in the point is the 2010 film *The Taqwacores*, in which Pakistani-American Muslims come together to travel the U.S. on a bus and play music. Originally based on Michael Muhammed Knight's eponymous novel, the film documents actual rock bands that were partly inspired by the novel, including

the point: El Fathi's chaotic poetry is messy for a reason- he's communicating a love for complicating reality, of taking orthodoxy and questioning it, expanding it, and finally, discarding it. Ultimately, El Fathi's poetry is burying orthodoxy by embracing a double-consciousness that recognizes social realities but also the social contradictions that destabilize them. Love is the ultimate form of compromise, because it has the capacity to make one rethink what ideas they are aligned to and why.

So in the final verses, "Cuando amanecía en Jericó/ ¡qué pena subía por las calles de Belén!", the poetic voice seems to be making a reference to passions running high, for better or for worse, in Jericho. When one talks of the poetic voice here, one is discussing the problematics of two realities where, on the one hand, people are making love, but on the other hand, there are also bombs going off and guns rattling off, all in the Palestinian-majority city. The inclusión of Bethleham in the poetic text, however, seems to be as a floating space, a metonymical reference to Jesus, a figure common to the three Abrahamic religions, a man who is known to stand for and to represent peace and compassion. Jericho is the real city, or a reference to the contemporary space as people experienced it when the poem was written (2003), while Bethleham seems to be a reference not to a real city, but to a Biblical reference for a hopeful and safe space where no one is hurt- in a word, a utopia. In this sense, Bethleham is idealized and romanticized by the speaker in its role as being the birthplace of a relatively selfless man. El Fathi's ability to take an Abrahamic figure such as Jesus and to frame his birth in terms that can

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Secret Trial Five, The Kominas, and Al-Thawra. Secret Trial Five, an all-female band that has challenged dominant Islamic ideas about sexuality and politics, has since distanced itself from *The Taqwacores* film, although they appeared in the movie when it premiered. The Kominas played at the 2009 South By Southwest (SXSW) music festival in Austin, Texas.

[36] *Haram:* The Arabic term for the forbidden and the off-limits.

be understood across all three faiths of the "people of The Book" further illustrates his ability to incorporate a cosmopolitan approach to composing poetry, and testifies to his own split-consciousness, in which he feels a part of himself to be in Africa but also in Western Europe.

Burial of one's own subjectivity comes at a heavy price. In Spain, opening up to tourism (in the 1960s), and then later, to membership in the European Union (in the 1980s) meant separating itself from the very historical elements that made, and still make it, so fascinating and so unique from the rest of Europe. It is perhaps not entirely true that "Africa begins at the Pyrenees," but the fact that modern-day Spain gets upset when hearing these claims is a direct revelation of its anxiety about black people, brown people, and non-Christian religions. At the same time, Spain would have nothing to "worry" about if there really was no African history, and so the fear of Moors and of increased Moroccan immigration reveals that Spain is, indeed, a geopolitical locus that owes quite a bit to its southern neighbor(s). The harder Spaniards try to bury their past, the more it seems to come back to the surface, and the buried historical marriage between Spain and Morocco floats up in the form of a ring, or the "anillo" that El Fathi brings up so much in his poetic imagery. El Fathi himself has discussed its symbolic significance: "es un anillo cargado de historia, que es un libro, en el que podemos leer toda la historia de este personaje" (Interview 26 Oct. 2012). The biggest problem with the attempt to bury one's history with another is that one cannot bury desire, romantic or economic, which itself breaks down barriers and destroys rigidity. Many will have to decide for themselves whether or not economic desire is inherently a good thing: after all, it seems

in many regards to be negative, since it justifies capitalistic exploitation of a market based purely upon materialism and supply and demand. Even romantic desire can have its negative aspects, but at least it does not necessarily attach a price tag to culture and to human lives.

El Fathi's imagery concentrates as well on the water. Upon first reading his poetry, one considers the Tetouani's love for Andalucía and considers the fact that perhaps he has been influenced by writers such as Juan Ramón Jiménez in *Diario de un reciencasado* (1917) or Rafael Alberti's *Marinero en tierra* (1924). But with time it becomes evident to the author of this analysis that the Moroccan's fascination with the sea goes beyond just the aesthetics of waves. El Fathi's poetry fixates many times on water and on the sea as a burial because there is the scientific truth that water is the universal solvent. It dissolves the hardest of rocks and minerals, and it ultimately destroys all membranes and surfaces. It shrinks coastlines and erodes beaches, and over time it wears down everything. Ultimately, water is the element that, along with the sun, can consume us all, despite our desires to compartmentalize everything and to sort out, categorize, and later justify our differences, rather than our similarities. It appears that El Fathi is looking for a time and a space where similarities become the priority, instead of being buried under concerns for maintaining obsolete borders and national identities. This is what he hints at when he discusses the importances of being proud of al-Andalus history and of identifying oneself as Andalusí in the twenty-first century:

> Los árabes han tenido la oportunidad de ser el centro de saber, al igual que está haciendo ahora los EE.UU. como uno de los países

> más poderosos y más importantes del mundo, por su cultura, por su saber, por su economía, por su potencialidad, también el mundo árabe ha tenido esta oportunidad […] recordar lo que fuimos no es nada negativo. Al contrario, es una manera de reivindicarse de que es posible el cambio y es posible aspirar a tener también una cultura igual de brillante o más que la que se tuvo en aquel entonces. Pero hablando de cultura, de saber, de pensamiento, de filosofía, y no de poder económico. (Interview 26 Oct. 2012)

El Fathi's words remind one that perhaps one of the biggest motivating reasons behind the Spanish argument for "cultural difference" is a combination of xenophobia and a concern over economic power. His ideas help readers realize that we in the West would do well to question orthodoxies, especially the Western, neoliberal dogma that money comes before life.

Chapter 2

No Wrest in Peace: Fighting Ventriloquism in the Maghreb

> Recuerdo que una tarde, como oyera un leve ruido en el cuarto vecino al mío, pregunté en voz alta: "Quién anda por ahí?" Y la voz de una criada recién llegada de su pueblo contestó: "No es nadie, señor, soy yo" – *El laberinto de la soledad* (66)

The Iberian country's relatively recent ascension into full European status, most notably in 1986, has changed its attitude toward a region with which it has had a long and interwoven history, from the period of Al-Andalus to its colonial Protectorate history and later to Spain's agreement to decolonize the Western Sahara in 1976. Suddenly, Spain's new status has caused it to distance itself from Morocco, and in the process it has abandoned the Maghreb to sort matters for itself. This does not mean that Morocco is no longer important to Spain: as sources document, Spain has an interest in the phosphate mines and the fishing waters off the Northern Atlantic coast of Africa (C. R. Pennell 334; James Sater 132) and for Morocco, Spain is its premier commercial partner. But Spain's rhetoric and self-positioning on the geopolitical map has changed.

In this chapter I will examine how the Moroccan author Ahmed Daoudi, in his novel *El diablo de Yudis* (1994), employs the trope of burial in order to counter Spanish ventriloquization of the Moroccan "Other." This analysis will include the analysis of three particular burials in Daoudi's text[37]: (1) the crossing of both land and water burials, (2) the fictitious story of the Guaschusch religious sect performing burial before a live audience, and (3) the burial by quicksand of neocolonial troops on a civilizing mission to save their southern neighbors from "the devil."

[37] The novel will be hereafter referred to as *Diablo*.

Before delving into an analysis of the first burial, it is crucial to establish the basic structure and premise of the text. Daoudi's novel consists of two stories that are narrated by a nameless *hlaiqi* or Moroccan oral storyteller. His stories are, respectively, (1) the story that he spins aloud for the audience that surrounds him in the plaza, and (2) his own personal autobiography, which he shares to the readers of the written text. The first story is about the people of the fictional land of Yudis, where humanitarian forces from a fictional Burwilasch continent come to save the natives of the former from an unidentified devil. Each group of people belongs to distinct geohistorical territories that resemble Spain (Burwilasch) and Morocco (the island of Yudis). The troops from Burwilasch all have Castilian names, and the people of Yudis all have Arab names. Thus one can easily read the novel as commenting indirectly on Spanish-Moroccan relations. In the second story, the narrator speaks apart to the reader about his autobiography, detailing how he failed in his attempts to migrate to Spain and how he ended up with his current job as a *halqa*. The stories weave in and out of each other, as the narrator at times stops to take a break and solicit money from those who are in the plaza listening to his story. It is during these breaks that he informs the readers of the novel of his own personal struggles immigrating to, and being deported from, Spain.

2.1 Burial as Passage

It is in the second story, the autobiography that the narrator tells during his breaks from spinning tales in the plaza, that one first encounters burial in the form of a cemetery. It is my goal here to draw a link between this encounter of a land burial, or cemetery, and that

of a sea burial. Near the beginning of the novel, the narrator-protagonist explains that in the afternoons he regularly leaves work in the plaza to go home. As he affirms, "Era el trayecto que me había asignado desde que empecé a trabajar en Bujlud" (34). This cemetery is a space that he must cross each day on his return home, and it is interesting that, on the other side, his wife Leuma awaits him. She will also be awaiting him while he is away, in Europe:

> La encontraba todos los atardeceres esperando en la puerta de la casa una media hora antes de mi llegada, contemplando mi silueta que solía subir la cuesta del cementerio, como si estuviera vigilando para rescatarme de la fragancia funeraria que apelaba a cada paso por el cementerio, donde pululaban las tumbas anónimas y deshechas sembrando una extensa colina medio tapada por un muro blanquecino. (34)

The traversal of the cemetery constitutes crossing a space of pain and memory. It is a daily return to the space that he had originally tried to leave in order to make more money and forge a better life for him and his family by working in Spain or somewhere further north in Europe. It is therefore reveals his current social condition. Originally he had thought that by going to Spain he would be able to resolve all his problems, as his family lives in dire poverty in a "bidonville" (shantytown) in the outskirts of Fez by the name of Tukadi Dos. It is this poverty, combined with the image of a European country of being what Manuel Martín Rodríguez calls a "país de maravillas" ("Aztlán y Al-Andalus" 36), that baits Moroccans as well as other African immigrants into crossing the Strait of

Gibraltar in the first place. Moroccan migrants' ventures into Spain are an escape from a poverty and from a landscape brought about by the self-same "país de maravillas," be it Spain, England or France, and their practices of colonialism.

The intense poverty suffered in the shantytowns is a symptom of a region and of a people whose personal space and sense of self has been defeated by colonization. Abdelkebir Khatibi was also familiar with this division of the Moroccan city, writing in *La mémoire tatouée* about European colonization and the geographical mapping of Maghrebi cities: "We know the colonial imagination: juxtapose, compartmentalize, militarise [sic], cut up the towns into ethnic zones, silt up the culture of the conquered nation" (qtd. in Kelly 230). Khatibi's words reveal the sense of alienation with which the colonized Moroccan lives. The alienated individual is symptomatic of an imagination, a psyche which has itself been tattooed upon the colonized mind: juxtaposed, compartmentalized, and cut up in order that the topography of the mind might be congruent with the topography of a colonially dissected city. This compartmentalized mapping reveals the two sides of Morocco, a division that exemplifies Walter Mignolo's idea that the shadow side of coloniality co-exists with, and in fact upholds, contemporary modernities (222).

Thus the cemetery becomes a highly charged signifier as both a borderland and a necropolis. The burial space demarcates a separation between the outskirts of Fez, known for its poverty, and the general city, which the narrator-protagonist describes as a place of economic vitality. So the narrator moves further away from his neighborhood and moves closer to the more economically developed part of the city, where he has access to more

economic opportunities. This is why at one point he states that "queremos vivir como los del centro" (55), an honest description of Morocco's infrastructure more and more resembling that of neoliberal globalization, where countries of the periphery are forced to compete with the metropolises that make up the center. The tension between the periphery and the center can be observed in several other parts of Daoudi's text. When in a slightly earlier part of the text his house burns down, the depressed narrator is invited by friends to forget his misfortunes by going out downtown. However, the downtown only reminds him of everything he is not, and of everything he does not have:

> Fuera de la cafetería donde se sentaba por primera vez vi a dos jóvenes, que no superaban los veinticinco años, aparcando un coche deportivo. Vi que algunos turistas salían del hotel con sus cámaras de vídeo. Vi a un señor que recogía uno de sus trajes de la lavandería de enfrente. Vi que los hombres que estaban al lado de nuestra mesa no tenían aspecto de trabajadores de una fábrica: les oí hablar de viajes a la playa y de películas de cine: descubrí, entonces, que los que vivían en este mundo eran otros y no yo. (54)

This sense of otherness reverses the roles that María Luisa Peñalva Vélez describes in her research on the other-ing of the immigrant in the discourse of the Spanish press (139-140). In the narrator's story, the wealthy subject, located in the more Europeanized downtown "centro" is described from the subject position of marginality. This description of the well-heeled travellers and residents of downtown Fez betrays the socioeconomic distance that exists in Fez, and specifically between the inhabitants of Tukadi Dos and the

colonial French quarter, known as the "ville nouvelle." The narrator's articulation of the downtown space, marked as a space of plenitude and vibrancy, is contrasted with his impoverished ghetto from whence he comes, as he writes that the folk living downtown, "Disponía no sólo de agua potable, sino de luz eléctrica y, seguramente, de teléfono. Así, si se le incendiase a alguno su casa no correría por ningún cementerio para llamar a los bomberos" (54) as he had had to do when his house had caught fire. This sense of being disconnected from the center grid is also noticeable in another part where the narrator laments that his work at the local factory, "sólo nos mantenía vivos para ver cómo vivían otros" (65), an unnerving perspective which illustrates his life as a veritable shadow figure. The fact that the narrator is nameless attests even further to his liminal status, as Victor Turner has written (102). By speaking from the shadows, the narrator critiques the conditions that perpetuate the disparity between rich and poor in Morocco.

This huge economic gap is one that was indeed spawned by colonialism, dividing city neighborhoods into ghettos. Sater writes that, under the French Protectorate, the segregation of Moroccan cities "is best illustrated in colonial city planning separating the ancient *medina* from the modern and French-populated *ville nouvelle*" (Sater 17). The narrator's subsistence in the ghettoized Tukadi Dos and his daily forays into the Bujlud plaza reflect this gentrified city structure.

The narrator's decision to become a storyteller, in addition to being a part of a traditional Moroccan oral tradition, is also indicative of the political and economic situation of Morocco. The coarse description of the narrator's poverty is a nod toward the deplorable living conditions under King Hassan II's reign (1961-1999), during which the

novel was written and, judging from the retrospective nature of the narration, most of the narrator's autobiography seems to take place in the late sixties or early seventies. In an in-depth historical study of Morocco, Pennell explains that under the 1968-1972 Five-Year Plan:

> […] the government began to allow 'auto-construction' in the shantytowns. A whole uncontrolled economy developed…street peddlers selling single cigarettes, packs of tissues and cigarette lighters, parking wardens, barbers and circumcisers, unofficial tourist guides, repairers of clothes and shoes. Many people lived by their wits and their numbers grew and grew; by 1971 around 69% of the urban working population was in the informal sector. If these people were hungry, they might flood out of their *bidonvilles* into the streets and squares of the more respectable parts of town. (329)

Pennell's description of the division of Morocco into haves and have-nots relates well with the spatial mapping of the city, and the borders that separate each neighborhood space. It also anticipates a "flood" not just out of the "bidonvilles" but out of Morocco proper into international territory, i.e. migration into Europe: but more on that later. The cemetery that the narrator crosses acts as both a bridge and as a divider between the economically active central parts of the city and the impoverished outlying suburbs. The burial ground thus becomes a space for crossing. The fact that the crossing becomes

associated with a cemetery qualifies it as a locus of death just as does another body which functions to separate and to unite: the Mediterranean Sea.

The danger of crossing the Mediterranean becomes evident in the novel when the narrator, riding in a cheap and shoddy raft, or "patera," with several others narrates his experiences. Ana Rueda, in her study on the literary analysis of Hispano-Moroccan migrant texts, has found the sea in literature to be constantly associated with death. She also makes the connection with death and crossing: "el viaje por mar tiende a asociarse a la agonía del emigrante, al peligro y a la muerte," while also associating the sea with a "tumba" (52). The danger of making the crossing across the sea becomes evident in the novel when, in a fight that breaks out just a little later on in the trip, the narrator witnesses the drowning and subsequent deaths of seven of the people who were on board with him: "dos negros, el argelino y otros cuatro marroquíes terminaron ahogándose en el mar" (99). However intense the experience, the narrator-protagonist's intent on economically improving his life drives him to continue despite the hardships. While the economic necessity is what drives the narrator to migrate, the perception he has of the other shore is that it is some sort of paradise, or Promised Land. This is what in immigration sociology is known as the pull factor, according to Castles and Miller (22). Consider the narrator's description of his first arrival upon Spanish shore:

> La tierra se veía más cercana; incluso ya se podía distinguir la
> arena de las rocas. Una alegría intensa nos invadía a todos.
> Sabíamos que era tierra a simple vista, pero nos fijábamos y nos
> fijábamos como si estuviéramos asegurándonos de la existencia de

> algo que podría ser un espejismo. Era la tierra que deseábamos pisar para olvidarnos de todos los riesgos que habíamos vivido. La tierra de la que todos los pobres volvían ricos. La tierra en la que yo decidí, costar lo que costara, convertir en realizables mis sueños. (100)

What the narrator does not yet realize is that the land where the poor supposedly become rich is, in a political sense, an "espejismo," or mirage. The narrator is caught by the Civil Guard and within very little time realizes that the reality of migration is much different than the fantasy that he had literally bought into, paying off members of the clandestine, migration network. As one of the few survivors to survive the horrific crossing by raft into Spanish waters, he is filmed on television in a glorification that proves to actually be humiliating and reaffirming of the Spanish stereotype of the hopelessly and helplessly shipwrecked migrant.

The narrator describes the gradual unraveling of his dreams: "me filmaban como si fuera un héroe americano que llegaba casi muerto tras salvar a la humanidad en una película. Aquel heroísmo era emocionantemente maravilloso vivirlo como una fantasía, pero penosamente amargo recordarlo como una realidad" (100). As we will see, this idea of a mirage and of fantasy/reality becomes part of a constant observation in Daoudi's text–the blind belief in an image as being truthful and representative of reality. Ana Rueda comments on this disappointing encounter with reality and explains how it relates to the ideas of paradise and of hell: "El paraíso propagado por las imágenes de la televisión pronto se descubre como una fabricación del mundo occidental y que la

realidad es otra (62).” As Martín-Rodríguez has recognized, the above description is an “elegant”testimony to the links between globalization, immigration, and the mass media (“Aztlán y Al-Andalus”). The image of Spain presented on television and in magazines is one that portrays the country as developed, rich and full of opportunity: the “centro” this time is not downtown Fez but the borders of Europe. Spanish intellectuals such as Mikel Azurmendi have capitalized on this image of Spain as a beacon of development to describe the reason why people choose to migrate to Spain to better themselves, a Eurocentric view that supposes that migrants have no other motivation to migrate to Spain other than to escape their backward culture. In other words, if Africa is the image of backwardness, Europe is the counter-model.

Disturbingly, this is the paradigm underlying Azurmendi’s arguments for African migrants coming into Europe:

> Que vengan a nosotros a mejorar también indica por sí mismo que ya han efectuado cierta ruptura con moldes tradicionales que les fuerzan a esperar que alguien o alguna fuerza misteriosa mejore las duras condiciones de vida en su tierra. Emigrar es ya un gran dispositivo cultural de cambio, pues significa abordar la vida propia con esperanza, abrirla a un futuro incierto pero mejor, desde la capacidad individual y cierta audacia. (164)

According to Michael Ugarte, this is Azurmendi’s idea of modernity, in which the migrant learns to break from his “moldes tradicionales” coming to Europe to “better themselves” (*Africans in Europe* 79). The unspoken positionality in this particular quote

on breaking with "moldes tradicionales" is one which assumes a Kantian conception of relations between Spain and Morocco, in which Spain as the superior elder paternalistically assists the infantile migrant who for once wishes to better her/himself. Azurmendi does not define the "moldes" from which the migrant is breaking away: he does, however, assume that Europe is the goal and that its neoliberal dominance is also the model to which the migrant aspires. According to this ideology, Europe is the democratic model and Africa–in this case Morocco--the desperate space of barbarity and backwardness from which the migrant must learn to liberate her/himself. We see this vein of thought in Azurmendi's opinion that, "Acceder a la nacionalidad española o europea exigiría además un arraigo democrático probado, mediante el cual un inmigrante se desprenda de su condición de emigrante y se vuelva uno más de nosotros" (163). The narrator's story, though, says nothing about this. He does not indicate that he wanted to escape a particular "mold" or even that he wanted to become 'just another Spaniard.'[38] His main motivation is to escape the poverty of his shantytown. But as Joseba Gabilondo has noticed, "Azurmendi does not allow the 'other'' to speak," (72) nor to voice his actual motivations. Spain is assumed by writers such as Azurmendi to be attractive to migrants because it is supposedly democratic and progressive.

Daoudi's text is groundbreaking as a work that allows a Moroccan to present another subjectivity noticeably absent in Spain's discussion of migration, often presented as an "enemigo en potencia" (Vélez Peñalva 135) in newspapers and on the small screen. The text demystifies this press image as a lie, and reveals the "paradise" image of Spain

[38] Who does actually say this is Saïd El Kadaoui Moussaoui in *Límites y fronteras* (2008).

to be false, despite Spain's desire to show itself to the world recently as a democratic and developed paradise. Instead of continuing to emphasize what some portray as the "duras condiciones" in Africa, Daoudi's novel focuses on the road less traveled, that is, the Strait, and the "duras condiciones" that await the migrant journeying north. The narrator-protagonist's disappointing returns back to Spain are echoed in his disappointing returns back home each day from work. Both are equally disappointing, returning back home where poverty and misery await.

If we compare the narrator's disappointing return to Morocco with his other (daily) returns back home through the graveyard, we see that in both there is the commonality of him crossing a space associated with death before coming home, impoverished, to his wife Leuma. After being deported from Spain in his second attempt to cross the Mediterranean, he imagines Leuma awaiting him in such a way that echoes his later crossings through the cemetery on the way back from the Bujlud plaza: "Mi mujer Leuma me esperaba en Fez; pensaría que yo ya había trabajado un año en Europa. Se enojaría por no haberla mandado ni una carta. Se imaginaría que en cualquier momento la podría sorprender con regalos y dinero ahorrado (*Diablo* 119)." But after being deported by the police in Murcia he describes again how his wife is awaiting him: "mi mujer, Leuma, me estaba esperando muy ilusionada" (*Diablo* 120). His disappointing return back to Morocco is marked by pain:

> Deseé no llegar nunca a Fez; deseé que el tren siguiera sin parar,
> siguiera hasta el desierto, siguiera hacia cualquier parte donde no

se encontrara la gente que me conocía. Era insoportable imaginar

cómo iba a enfrentar mi fracaso. (*Diablo* 121)[39]

In each crossing he is sadly returning home: his return from Spain is marked by a preoccupation of not having brought back enough (any) money or presents and therefore of being a disappointment. In his return home on a daily basis these expectations have been lowered to such an extent that Leuma waits outside to make sure he is okay. In the latter instance, expectations have been dramatically lowered. The protagonist now comes home not to a wife waiting with great hope ("ilusionada") but simply waiting by the door ("esperando en la puerta," 34) and watching carefully to assure herself that her husband is still alive ("vigilando para rescatarme de la fragancia funeraria que apelaba a cada paso por el cementerio," 34). A narrative of hope has instead become a narrative of resignation and disillusionment. The other shore, Spain, remains far away, in a world that is in "el más allá" (the great beyond). By crossing through a cemetery on the way home, the narrator provides a spatial portrayal of the Tukadi Dos ghetto as a sort of necropolis, a veritable city of the dead for people who do not live in the well-fed and well-off downtown area. Likewise, the great beyond for the poor residents of the *bidonville* is Fez, the historically colonial part. But the spaces, both regional and national, both the land cemetery and the sea, are also places tied together by a memory of experience. The crossing of the sea, which the narrator refers to as an act of "heroísmo," is an experience that the narrator describes as "penosamente amargo recordarlo como una realidad" (100). As is seen here, memory is an important aspect in how the narrator interprets that tragic

[39] In Mohamed Sibari's *El caballo* (1993), one also sees a similar situation regarding Moroccan migration to Spain and the migrant's failures to cross from Tangiers to the Iberian penninsula.

day – and he will later point out in the novel that he never finds out about the others' fate, which leaves open the idea of whether or not the other passengers on the raft passed away or survived, although as mentioned he does know of several who did die. The trauma the narrator suffers comes back to haunt him years later.

The fact that the narrator is daily crossing through the cemetery on his way back from work is quite significant in trauma theory. Caruth, defining trauma, writes that "In its general definition, trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena" (91). One wonders why it is that he has specifically chosen to cross the burial ground while trotting back home. The inclusion of this information in the book cannot be gratuitous: according to Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, it would seem that the narrator may be addressing an unconscious need, in a colonially framed context over which historically his people have been subjugated, to gain control and mastery over a trauma that was "not fully grasped" as it occurred. However, as van der Kolk and McFarlane point out, "repetition causes further suffering for the victims and for the people around them," while confirming that traumatized individuals tend to display a compulsive behavior to re-expose themselves to the source of the trauma (10-11). The pain of nearly dying in the Strait and of being hospitalized and then deported back to Morocco after having witnessed the death of some and without knowing whether the rest were dead is a rather distressing experience. In his much later meanderings through the cemetery it becomes curious as to what the narrator imagines when he sees the tombstones. It does not seem

that he passes through them nonchalantly, as he is conscious of the "fragancia funeraria" that can be found in the burial ground. His description of the graves as being "tumbas anónimas" can be full of meaning, too, as they seem to oddly resemble the deaths at sea, which are anonymous as well in the sense that they never receive a formal burial. Daoudi's text uses the imagery of tombs and burial to draw a parallel between the social reality that the exit from strictly defined social classes (the neighborhoods within Fez), as well as geographical borders (Morocco/Spain), is fraught with challenges and tragedy.

There is a trauma here that is related to an unburied past, one that is indeed revived by the crossing of the cemetery, which becomes an intrusion upon the narrator's consciousness. Like the anonymous dead, the narrator himself is anonymous: if there are no names on the tombstones that he crosses, neither does the narrator supply the reader with *his* name. This state of being nameless is fascinating, because it contradicts the idea of a person with a name representing and speaking for all those who died in anonymity in their crossing from Morocco and into Spain. Through deliberate and conscious anonymity, this particular act of voicing the misery and realities suffered by thousands of Moroccan migrants each year actually enacts a practice problematized originally by Kelly, who has written that conceptions of subjectivity and self-hood are different in the Arabo-Islamic world than they are in the "West" (by which she means Europe and the United States). Quite often, intellectuals in the West, in film and on television, portray North Africa and the Middle East simply as hotbeds of terrorism and poverty, subjects or locations that are unable to rationally speak for themselves, or are just simply unwilling to do so. There is very little recognition of the Maghreb region's cultural and literary

endeavors, where individual expression and dissent do exist. North Africans, and in this case, Moroccans, are thought of as lacking agency and originality of thought and of any other sort of dimensionality due to their Arabo-Islamic heritage, culture and identity.[40] Kelly has identified the deeply rooted belief among Eurocentric critics in the idea that Arabo-Islamic communities are conformist and traditional and therefore have no concept of individuality or of subjectivity. This argument is ethnocentric because it assumes that only the West has a grasp of these concepts. The discriminatory discourse revolves around the idea that Maghrebis are just a mass or a horde of people who simply go along with dogmatic ideas because they are unable to think for themselves on an individual basis (Kelly 15-18). This idea of the Maghrebi is found in the rhetoric in Spain on migrants as Moors and the terminology often used to describe them, such as "la morisma" (D'Ors 55), and has a lineage that goes back at least to the turn of the twentieth century, where the Spanish realist writer Galdós referred to the Moors in *Aita Tettauen* as "la morería." However, autobiographical discourse in Arabic literature has been found in classical Arabic literature and also in pre-Islamic literature. The colonial conquests did not bring individual expression and individuality to North Africa, although it might be important to affirm the influence Europe had on people's ideas on individuality, such as in the cult-of-personality worship that Doris Sommer has discussed (qtd. in Kelly 26).

But by displaying a sense of agency in relating how he came to live in poverty while refusing to name himself, the narrator is actively painting the dismal

[40] Moroccans are also looked down upon by much of the Arab-Muslim world, especially in the Levant, where they are seen as uncouth. Part of this is derogatory perception is based around the idea that Moroccans, having mixed with the Amazighen (local, pre-Islamic peoples), are not pureblood Arabs and therefore do not have the high culture of the Mesopotamian world (centered in Damascus and Baghdad). See for example Nidal Chebbak's article "Moroccan Identity."

socioeconomic portrait of his country while taking himself out of the hagiographic, individualistic tradition of the "I"-centered western autobiographical narrative that is rooted in Europe as going back to the second half of the nineteenth century (Kelly 30) and which Sommer despises so much. Neither is he claiming to represent monolithically the realities that constitute Moroccans' lives: without a name the emphasis on the individual is taken away, thus destroying the western myth that one individual can speak *for* the voiceless. His critique of 'fortress' Spain and his deportations back to Morocco, however, are manifestations of individual dissent against collective submission to neoliberal realities and ideologies, and they are also ways of standing up to the otherwise disabling legacies of the traumas of colonialism and their resonance in the contemporary postcolonial world. In the following section there will be an analysis of this contemporary resonance in the form of the oppressive leaders who rule in the interests of the ex-colonizers, such as in the case of the leader of a fictitious religious group whose behavior and censorship of others resembles that of King Hassan II's "Years of Lead" (Susan Gilson Miller 1) tenure.

2.2 The Autocrat and the Liminal Shadow Figure

In both the above section on the physical graveyard in Tukadi Dos and in the narrator's fictional tale in the plaza about Yudis there is a discourse of Paradise that seems to also be an embellishment of what life is like on the "other side." However, in addition to this manipulation by the powerful classes there is also a tendency, as the reader will see, to censor political opposition and discordant opinions, a tendency which

can be evidenced in the burial scene where a religious leader buries his friends alive in order to converse with them. Like the narrative of the autobiography discussed above, the tale of the Guaschusch religious group in the *yudisco* (Yudisian) graveyard is a subtle critique of a people's will to believe blindly in promises of what it is like to cross over to the other side, and in promises which may (or may not) come true. Intertwined in this particular narrative are the promises of Spain as Eldorado and the promises of a future for those who learn not to protest and to keep quiet. In either case what is evident is a problematic that is stated by Mahmud, one of the characters in the Guaschusch scene, as being "el problema de los creyentes" (24).

"El problema de los creyentes" is an issue that Daoudi parodies, when in the first chapter he introduces the reader to a religious sect known as the Guaschusch. The religious organization is led by a man whose name is Marbuh. This character decides he would like to show off his ability to talk with the dead. It becomes quite obvious from the beginning that Marbuh is not capable of practicing these arts. Before actually carrying out his performance before a live audience, he decides to practice talking to the dead in a remote location where nobody is around. It is significant that in these sessions, he literally is only able to get a bark out of a dog. The dog, of course, being known as "man's best friend," can be understood as an unquestionably obedient being. The barking dog is also an important image in ancient Arab literature: in a famous ninth century work by Jahiz, *Kitab Al-Hayawan*, the animal represents a Bedouin lost in the desert who finds his tribe by metamorphosizing into a dog and barking. In her introduction, Andrea Flores Khalil observes, "The barker is the critic, the subversive but humanizing citizen who puts

into question the current trends of his society" (xviii), fighting to abandon the "colonialist and nationalist languages used by the French colonizers, postcolonial dictators, and their successors" (xx). None of these images help to embellish neither Marbuh's character nor his reputation. In any event, the narrator establishes that Marbuh does not give up in his thus-far failed ambitions to talk with dead people: "La decepción no fue grave, porque no le preocupaba tanto conseguirlo como demostrarlo a los demás. Por ello pensó en pagar a unos conocidos suyos para que se enterrasen por un tiempo limitado en unas tumbas. Les ordenó que debían contestarle cuando les hablara y les prometió sacarlos cuando se fuera la gente (22)."

It is obvious here that Marbuh is less concerned about actually truly possessing the powers than he is of simply appearing to have them before the others. "El problema de los creyentes" here becomes an issue in which the resolution to all of one's problems resides in believing that there is some sort of proverbial "pie in the sky," be it heaven, or job opportunities up North, a geopolitical location which has been mythologized as being a sort of paradise itself. Marbuh uses the burial of his friends in a cemetery to make a show of this talent, which of course is a sort of magic of its own, the witchcraft trickery of illusion based on representing a certain image of oneself and one's surroundings. His exploitation of illusions and failure to account for reality resemble that of the postcolonial autocrat. As a general public begins to form in the cemetery, the performance begins. Marbuh tries to work his artistry, but everything goes downhill:

Cuando terminó de balbucear sus cantos, Marbuh se levantó y se arrimó a la línea donde estaban enterrados sus amigos. Se detuvo. Cerró los ojos y gritó fuertemente:

- Qué tal estáis en el más allá? -Pero la respuesta fue otra pregunta:

- Has terminado ya, Marbuh?

Entonces Marbuh trató de disimular ante los asistentes y de aclarar sutilmente a sus amigos que todavía no había terminado y que todo lo que había hecho era simplemente recitar unos cantos introductorios. Así, sin ofrecer tiempo a los presentes para que dudasen, reiteró la misma pregunta fingiendo no haber entendido la respuesta anterior.

- Cómo estáis en el más allá, he dicho?

-Hace mucho calor; yo ya no aguanto más.

-Tú estás en el infierno; debes callarte; yo quiero hablar con los que están en el paraíso. (22-3)

Marbuh's question "¿Qué tal estáis en el más allá?" becomes caught up in the concern for image, an image that he is trying to present to the public to instill within them the belief that the other side, be it Spain or heaven, can be faithfully represented. After all, it is here that the cemetery, like the Mediterranean Sea, can "also be read as a *t/here* space of Trans/Hispanic identity" (Manuel Martín-Rodríguez "Mapping the Trans/Hispanic Atlantic" 216). "Allá" can be "over there" on the other shore, or "over

there" in the other world, which could be either heaven or hell in the case of a religious death or Spain in the case of geopolitical positioning. "Tú estás en el infierno" can be read as *You are in Morocco*, and "Yo quiero hablar con los que están en el paraíso" can be read as *I want to speak with those who have gone to Paradise/ Heaven/ Spain*. Indeed, the response of Marbuh's buried friend implies that his life is unbearable. This is consistent with what life was like for many under the reign of Hassan II, when Daoudi's novel was published.[41] Abdalah Saaf writes that the Moroccan sociopolitical system in the seventies, the core years of Hassan's rule, was one "in which [...] the resources were insufficient, the means of work rudimentary, the juridical and s[y]ndicalist protection, as a result of the political situation, were inexistent: in the mass media, journalistic professionalism was just a minor detail" (qtd. in Campoy-Cubillo 67). Sater has confirmed that under Hassan's regime, Morocco's human rights record was quite poor (133-134). Given that he ruled until 1999, it would appear that this oppression has been revealed in subtle fashion by the author of *Diablo.*

Given the context of Hassan II's reign during the "Years of Lead," Marbuh can also be seen as a representation of the post-independence autocrat, trying to assure people that at some point in the future things will somehow be better in order to justify the present misery and poverty that they endure as a necessary evil. Marbuh's insensitivity to suffering is indicative of a leader caught between the dominating interests of Western powers, and of projecting a dogmatic idea of a Morocco that has "progressed" since its

[41] There is also the possibility that Daoudi's novel is an indirect criticism not of Hassan II, but rather of Driss Basri, Hassan II's defense minister and right-hand man. According to Susan Gilson Miller, Basri was the "chief planner of the campaign of repression carried out throughout the 1980s and 1990s" (*A History of Modern Morocco* 186).

colonial days under foreign rule. Either way he finds himself obligated to justify the neoliberal economy that keeps the great many of his country impoverished so as to continue to receive certain select benefits from the Western European powers that prop him up in power. Indeed, since the beginning of the novel there is a noticeable giddiness with which the *yudisco/* Moroccan subjects receive the arrival of the humanitarian troops from Burwilasch/Spain. This gratitude and servile joviality are illustrated in the following passage: "Ahora, con la llegada de las fuerzas de Burwilasch con sus medios sofisticados, […] Todos los antanianos e incluso muchas personas de los pueblos cercanos habían venido con sus niños para concentrarse en el muelle de Antan, a la espera del arribo de los defensores, con flores, música y bailes tradicionales (9)." These *yudisco* citizens from the fictitious capitol city of Antan find themselves obligated to cheer for this entry of foreign troops on their soil: their economic livelihood depends upon the political amity of their powerful neighbor, such as Sater has recognized as being the case between Morocco and Spain. He writes on Morocco's close relations with the EU community, and even of its attempts to join the European bloc:

> King Hassan's personal belief in anchoring Morocco's economic and political future with that of Europe – going as far as applying for EU membership in 1987 – may have been the ultimate reason for accepting what may seem utterly unfair: an unreciprocated dismantling of customs duties and opening up its market to EU firms that have a competitive advantage, while accepting continuous EU protectionist measures in those areas where

Morocco had a comparative advantage – textiles, food processing

and agriculture. (110)

In addition, it is well documented that Morocco has major agreements with Spain regarding the amount of fishing the latter can do in Moroccan waters (Sater 132; Pennell 334). However, it is also interesting that Morocco has been turned down by the EU for financial aid due to human rights violations, such as happened in 1992 (Sater 133). So not only is Morocco financially dependent upon the EU, but it also has been recognized as a region wanting for its human rights record. The *yudiscos* must accept European/Spanish paternalistic aid if they want to continue to have a viable partnership with the *defensores.* Otherwise they stand to be cut off financially from a system that, thanks to colonialism, they have grown to become dependent upon. André Gunder Frank famously referred to this relationship as the "development of underdevelopment,"[42] caused by economies that were introduced to colonial enterprises before the onslaught of African independence in the fifties, sixties and seventies. The relationship between Yudis and Burwilasch, as between Morocco and Spain, is quite tight. The narrator even mentions at the very beginning of the novel that "las ventajas de la lucha contra el diablo se entrecruzaban en hilos de una bandera de solidaridad" (5), an affirmation of the complicity of post-independence leadership with the ex-colonizer. Mbembe describes this middle-man form of governance carried out by the African autocrat:

[42] In his 1966 article "The Development of Underdevelopment," the famed Marxist intellectual André Gunder Frank analyzes how so-called "developed" countries further undermine the potential for very economically poor, or "undeveloped" countries to flourish.

> …there are virtually no limits to what he may do. Nothing stops him except that *other* brute force, the one that has made him lackey of a foreign power…Should his master agree to let a few crumbs fall from the laden table, the autocrat is full of thanks, proclaiming his gratitude to all and sundry, and leading his sycophants in an interminable dance. (*On the Postcolony* 164)

These sycophants, his buried friends, know they must dance because they are being watched by two audiences: one, their own domestic leader (Marbuh as a representative of state power), and two, the international community (the audience that has paid to see Marbuh carry out his performance). When Marbuh says *dance*, the buried subjects do so, but reluctantly, and not without subverting the image that was supposed to be projected.

Regarding the performance in the cemetery, which even the narrator acknowledges as an act in which "el presunto santo mantuvo su teatralidad" (23), Marbuh's plan has all but gone to the trash. Everything that he had set up is now in disarray. The subjects buried in the graves have not satisfactorily answered his inquiries on their state of being. Instead of saying they were "fine," they complained. So now Marbuh has to cover up for it. Regardless of what he had told the others to do, reality rears its ugly head (for Marbuh), and the whole show backfires. His subjects, who were paid by him to play a part and to speak only when spoken to, can no longer put up with the charade, hence the response – **"**Hace mucho calor; yo ya no aguanto más." When Marbuh asks of them "¿Qué tal estáis en el más allá?," he is interpellating in an Althusserian sense, transforming the buried individuals into subjects. They have been

hailed by him, and the expectation is that they will all speak when spoken to. And when thus summoned, they do respond. However, their response is not according to plan. Marbuh's angry reaction to their decidedly un-propagandistic replies reveals his fear that their honest replies will cause a scandal: "Debes callarte." He thus silences that which he has not asked for. Yes, he wanted a response, it is true, but not *that* kind of response, for the answer "hace mucho calor; yo ya no aguanto más" is not simply a description of what it is like to be buried alive: it also describes what it is *really* like to be on the other side as an illegal immigrant in Southern Spain. One recalls the narrator's subjective description of crossing the Mediterranean as being "penosamente amargo recordarlo como una realidad."

"Hace mucho calor; yo ya no aguanto más" is a description that illustrates that Morocco is getting legally stuffy: there are fewer and fewer rights that the population enjoys in Morocco, especially during King Hassan's rule. Simultaneously, it describes the conditions of life for those who already are in a geopolitical "más allá," or other world, Spain. There on the Peninsula the situation for migrants is not much better. In the end, the buried subject is re-writing a script by making it known that she/he is not willing to put up with socially and economically exclusionary politics anymore, a role reversal which shows a certain amount of agency. Here the buried respondent actually goes from being an interpellated subject to being an individual, reversing Marbuh's interpellation, and reversing the Althusserian hold on ideological power that Marbuh thought he had. So now the latter, formerly vested with the talents and abilities that gave him the authority to

speak, is now revealed as a failed magician. The emperor stands naked without his clothes.

However, as the entertainment industry's famous refrain goes, *the show must go on.* The people who have gathered and paid to see the Guaschusch leader speak with the dead are beginning to doubt the authenticity of the spectacle, which itself is later described in the text as a "farsa descabellada" (24). But the people involved in the theatrical play, Marbuh as well as his friends, continue to proceed. There is a parallel between this play as a "farsa" and the presentation of Spain as a sort of paradise, the latter pertaining to media imagery. The question "¿qué tal estáis en el más allá?" is purely a rhetorical question to which the leader expects no answer, because the real answer contradicts the official line. The answer to his inquiry, "Hace mucho calor,*"* immediately communicates two things to the audience that has come and paid to see Marbuh: (1) the communication that the religious leader is sustaining is totally false, proving that the leader actually cannot know what is on the other side (because he cannot, in effect, speak with the dead), and (2) that Spain/Europe is not the paradise that people believe it to be, which contradicts a surprising message that Albert Memmi says post-independence governments often give their people:

> […] in spite of growing resources, these governments are less and less capable of handling the increased demand for them, or providing even the minimum requirements, and the temptation has been great to encourage population decline. Although they did nothing to openly promote immigration, they did nothing to oppose

it, sometimes even lending a helping hand. Morocco has dissuaded its immigrants from returning home. (*Decolonization and the Decolonized* 73-4)

In other words it is often in the elite's interests to promote Europe as a desirable place to go, as a sort of geographical miracle. It also deflates pointed and relevant criticisms coming from subjects who are not afraid to give an honest account on the state of affairs within the country. On that note, it is important to note how this faux burial relates to international politics. It is as if the audience is the UN, and before them the Guaschusch have put on a display of magic and wonder. However, when the international audience (or UN) looks closely at the situation, they will find subtle displays of discontent that render the mystifying illusion of the leader's artistry false. Here there is limited agency, such as one would find in any politically repressed country. Yes, the people buried continue to go on with the show, as they know they must; for they are on display and they recognize that they temporarily benefit by going along with the leader's words and thoughts. However, for the first time they have an audience. To contradict Foucault, there *is* an outside.[43] With people there to witness their testimony, Musa and the other "buried" members do not speak in vain. It is in this sense that Tadeusz Slawek writes that "the cemetery is a lesson for democracy" (44). Once one begins to perceive a space as cemetery where one can find death, it becomes possible to understand that when

[43] In *The History of Sexuality vol. 1*, Foucault questions whether or not "there is no absolute outside" (95), making the case that no human subject can ever create the situation whereby they are fully outside of a power system or matrix that has created them and nurtured them from the beginning.

censorship is witnessed by an international public, it becomes very hard for dictatorships to justify their lack of political transparency.

The existence of an audience gives a person a sense of purpose and therefore, of life. Slawek writes that "without it, we are doomed to live a spectral existence of those who are not only 'buried alive' but whose lives remain totally sealed in and by incomprehension" (44). There is to be found in this cemetery what Lukács has described as "the concrete possibilities for men to comprehend their own existence as something historically conditioned, for them to see in history something which deeply affects their daily lives and immediately concerns them" (914). Read from this perspective, it appears that the text has been written so that the complaints of the "dead" are heard by the international community that finally is listening. Similar to what Caruth has written regarding the trauma of historical memory ("The Claims of the Dead" 427), the characters here are "suffering before the law," proclaiming their grievances, and then reviving and vindicating theirselves legally. There finally is a dialectical relationship, where world powers hear the testimony of Moroccan/Yudisco citizens speaking out against the postcolonial "miracles" of independent Morocco, and conversely, of the "miracles" of Spain for migrants.

It is by listening that the Western powers and centers of transparency discover what natives to Fez and other parts of Morocco discovered a long time ago. The narrator in a short story, *Después de Tánger* (2003), by Larbi El Harti can help us further illustrate the plight of post-independence Morocco: "pronto descubrimos que las promesas de una vida mejor no nos correspondía y que nuestras vidas de pobres y marginados sólo habían

cambiado de dueño" (18). In other words, the subjects know that control of their government had changed hands from the Director-Generals of the Spanish and French Protectorates to the Western-supported "native" leaders who would come afterwards, proclaiming freedom, anti-imperialism and democracy all while following a system that borrowed its structures, forms and concepts from the colonizing metropolises of Paris and Madrid. Similarly, "las promesas de una vida mejor" in Spain are recognized as virtually non-existent for the migrant. "El más allá," in Spain is often no better an alternative than the options that are available for Moroccans in the "más acá," or their native land.

This blind belief in the promises that await people, including immigrants, on the European continent is being dispelled by those who are supposedly dead and in "el más allá." While not a parade for human rights, the protest in the cemetery has begun. Marbuh says so himself; in his conversation with his "dead" friend Musa, who, buried underground, is beginning to choke on the dirt falling into his grave:

> -Musa, soy el santo Marbuh. ¿Cuándo moriste?
>
> -…Oye…me estoy muriendo de verdad… sácame ahora…
>
> me entra tierra…
>
> Entonces, ante los pocos asistentes que permanecieron, el presunto santo Marbuh trató desesperadamente de disimular su fracaso, interrumpiendo a su amigo Musa:
>
> -No. No debes protestar; Dios es Grande y Poderoso; es Él quien decide, no yo; la gente se va a equivocar, creerán que soy como Dios… (24)

Marbuh's words betray his true ambition–a dictator would love for people to think of him as God. The simultaneous action of putting words in another person's mouth, while they are being silenced (the dirt falling on them and covering up their voices) reminds one of the ventriloquism of which Martin-Márquez speaks when she writes about "the classic colonialist gesture of infantilization, which withdraws from them the agency of articulation" (333). The result is that the "subaltern…will be as mute as ever" (333). The action of Marbuh speaking and the consequences of this representation for the physically oppressed and buried Musa are illustrated in the burial site caving in, and dirt from all sides silencing the protesting friend even as he speaks. The prophet who sells himself as a medium does not give his subject a voice, as he says he does. Marbuh's is a quiet censorship. Achille Mbembe writes on how this unreliable voice, which claims to be speaking for the other, can actually dehumanize the person being spoken for.

The power over the life of another takes the form of commerce: "a person's humanity is dissolved to the point where it becomes possible to say that the slave's life is possessed by the master. Because the slave's life is like a 'thing', possessed by another, the slave existence appears as a perfect figure of a shadow ("Necropolitics" 161)."

If before the author of this analysis has discussed the shadow side of modernity *a la* Mignolo, then one can understand how the vestiges of coloniality's legacy uphold modernity in Morocco, where its globalization in the name of neoliberalism keeps it ensnared in a web of servitude to the ex-colonizers vis-à-vis the leadership of an autocratic puppet whose interests are not that of ordinary Moroccan citizens, but of the European powerbrokers who put the former into power. As the leader, Marbuh is able to

enslave his people for profit. After all, people have paid to see the performance. This shadow status is what unites both narratives in the novel, as separate as they seemingly are. In the autobiographical narrative one notices how the fictional tale of marginality in the Guaschusch burial bleeds into the narrator's social reality and status in Fez. The status can be noticed in the very physical descriptions of the members of the Tukadi Dos neighborhood where the narrator lives even after the suburb achieves recognized status. The inhabitants of the *bidonville* reflect in their behavior a certain familiarity with the shadows, a mentality that is hard to change overnight: "Todo el barrio se iluminó y se vieron los rostros que jamás se descifraban porque siempre salían antes que el sol y volvían después de que pusiera el sol, como si estuvieran tratando de permanecer en la oscuridad para llevar una vida invisible (*Diablo 67)*." Thus we see Mignolo's contrast between the world of light and dark, two components which form the two faces of a single coin in the present-day Maghreb, that of modernity (downtown Fez) and coloniality (Tukadi Dos). Returning back to the story of the Guaschusch, Marbuh's marginalization of his subjets is similar in behavior to that of the colonizer who came before him. However, the friends of Marbuh who are buried in the cemetery refuse to continue on with their status as human shadows. This self-awareness as political agents of change contradicts the common belief in Europe, at least in political and intellectual discourse, that African migrants are passive, non-reflecting individuals who simply follow the path of least resistance.

The scene is simultaneously a demonstration of action and submission by human subjects who are tired of being represented by a person who does not actually speak on

their behalf: for example, to the extent that Musa and the others are going on with the show, they are acquiescing to the status quo. However, while not openly challenging the production, they do subvert the whole process by their total lack of enthusiasm, which, while not purposeful, does reveal the cracks in the performance. To the extent that the buried subjects' actions are not purposeful nor intentionally subversive, it cannot be said that the acts demonstrate absolute subversive agency on the part of those buried. What it does indicate, however, is that the buried subjects are in such a state of despair that they can no longer afford to hold up a fake smile, and that, when pressed, they will let go of their fear and tell their end of the story as they please. Daoudi is drawing attention to who has voice: in this case it is Marbuh. The people speaking out from their graves are tired of having others speak about how their present experience as inhabitants (and citizens) of Morocco "is." Rarely can one person represent *how things are.* By simultaneously seeing Marbuh tell those who speak to shut up while falsely representing them to an audience, the reader, identifying with those who have paid to see Marbuh, gets to experience the witnessing of false testimony, otherwise known as ventriloquism.

This act of "voicing" the other, of giving voice to the silenced oppression, needs to be reflected upon. The "heroic" act of speaking for those who do not have a voice, paternalistic in its assumptions, understands those who are not in positions of power to be dependent upon the educated and superior other to articulate their needs, an act which in this case erroneously places Spanish writers into a dubious savior role. Martin-Márquez maintains that texts which "give voice" to the subaltern actually serve to reinforce the silence and further the misunderstanding between those in power and those who don't

have power. Her key concern is with the problematics of representation and how subaltern subjects are represented in works created by authors, playwrights and directors who do not entirely understand the other's situation, consequently misrepresenting the truth of what is really going on in a given region. Yet, "giving voice" is not enough. By illustrating how Morocco's leaders bury dissenting discourse, Daoudi's text reveals that those who are "on the other side" are suffering just as much as those who are living in their impoverished native country. "El más allá" (Spain/Paradise) and "here" (Morocco/Hell) become recognized as two similar spots, not otherworldly but existing in the same political framework whereby hell exists for the contemporary immigrant no matter where he/she goes.

In this particular scene involving the Guaschusch, we see that the structure of the grave is not holding up and that dirt is beginning to flood the grave, at once silencing and (nearly) killing the human being inside. It is here that Daoudi's text critiques the image of the other side and the false promises of there existing some sort of proverbial *pie in the sky*, as claimed by the leaders in order to keep the population in line. However, these leaders speak for the ex-colonizing superpowers, not in spite of them. The agency shown in the narrator, and in the characters in his stories, is an audaciousness to question not only Europe but also its hold on Morocco's indigent leaders. By voicing a dissent which questions autocratic leadership, the burial scene with the Guaschusch members functions to other the leadership as belonging to the self-interests of European coloniality, and thus "Othering" a power structure from which brave voices are seeking to detach themselves. Recognizing powerful entities, be they autocratic leaders or foreign military troops, as

other, can be important in highlighting political and socioeconomic issues in local regions, because if these powerful groups and leaders only speak for a particular geopolitical interest, i.e. the Spanish and European interests, then they cannot help solve the particular issues---poverty, unemployment, and lack of socioeconomic infrastructure, that plague a region as tied up in coloniality's history as is Morocco.

2.3 Neocoloniality and Overcoming Colonial Trauma

The "othering" of Burwilaschian/European troops as the foreign invader can help identify and problematize one of Morocco's most pressing international affairs dynamics: the quality and extent of foreign presence on Moroccan soil. This identification as the European outsider as "other" is not used to dehumanize the European but rather to identify the role of the European soldier as "other" in the sense that the agenda the soldier has, in the end, is not compatible with postcolonial independence. Part of the reason the Burwilaschian/Spanish soldier is there is to establish control over overseas territory, hence expanding imperial status. As the reader will see in the protagonist's story of the humanitarian forces from Burwilasch coming to stamp out the devil in Yudis, roles of invader and invaded are reversed. If one reads the story as one in which Europe, the ex-colonial metropolis, comes in to dictate what is wrong with a country that supposedly is independent (Morocco), one can see how the trope of invading immigrants coming into Spain is flipped through the burying of invading Spanish troops coming into Morocco. The arrival of the Burwilaschian rescue mission at the very beginning of the novel, complete with ships, tanks and military generals, recalls colonial conquest in its span

from 1492 to the 1956: “Navegaban los barcos hacia las costas de la isla de Yudis. El capitán Julio Romero de Santa Bárbara bajó al camarote del general para anunciarle la llegada al puerto de Antan, capital de la isla” (5).

The scene here reminds one of the arrival of the *Pinta*, the *Niña* and the *Santa María* during the colonial conquest carried out by Christopher Columbus in the name of the Catholic Kings at the end of the fifteenth century, preparing the Americas for the arrival of the Conquistadors. Its anachronicity and overall disorienting feel are similar to the arrival of the ships to the strange island in Manuel Rui’s novel on postcoloniality and contemporary historical memory, *Memória de mar* (1980). There is, just as in Rui’s text, an equal amount of odd and disorienting conquistador technologies of differing epochs deployed in a compressed time period. In Rui’s work one reads of nuclear submarines, radars, tanks, planes as well as of priests and ships, what Niyi Afolabi reads as a “mimetic rendering” of colonial history, where “memory serves as a regenerative device of denouncing degeneration, reliving the past while reconfiguring it into a relevant present” (104). Afolabi’s reading can help us make the connection between the world portrayed in the *halqa*’s story and the unburying of the ties between colonialism past and present. In the *Diablo* metanarrative we also see the deployment of a “mimetic rendering” of colonial history, in the form of two translators, Inmaculado and Jacinto, who as contemporary “lenguas,” or translators, seem as essential to the neocolonial quest as Malintzin was in the European conquest of Nueva España. But here one finds that the technology of conquest, despite its humanitarian mask, is quite advanced: the logistics department for the Burwilaschian civilizing mission is made up of geographers,

anthropologists, sociologists, veterinarians, physicists, parapsychologists, and of particular interest, speleologists, all with a common objective, namely, "localizar al diablo y acabar con él estuviera donde estuviera" (12).

This group of humanitarian troops, known in the novel as the F.I.I. ("Fuerzas de Intervención Inmediata"), is the armed version of a neocolonial civilizing mission meant to save the people of Yudis from themselves. It is an uncanny haunting of previous civilizing missions, a repetition of European conquistadors coming to liberate the childlike people of Yudis, i.e. Morocco, from the claws of the ever-mobile (and undefined) devil. The F.I.I. resemble in their nature the NATO Response Force or U.N. peacekeepers, intervening once again in the affairs of the developing world. The Yudisians' welcoming of the troops' arrival echoes the supposed welcoming that the Arawaks gave Colombus when he arrived at what is now Watling Island. In Colombus' *Diarios de viaje*, the reception of the newly-arrived Spaniards is described in the following passage: "…venían a las barcas de los navíos adonde nos estábamos, nadando, y nos traían papagayos y hilo de algodón en ovillos y azagayas y otras cosas muchas, y nos las trocaban por otras cosas que nos les dábamos, como cuentecillas de vidrio y cascabeles. En fin, todo tomaban y daban de aquello que tenían de Buena voluntad (30)."[44]

While the Burwilaschians were warmly received by the natives, and this illustrates the locals' dependence upon economic and logistical support from the financially wealthy North. However, it is precisely this warm relationship that the

[44] In Spanish, Colombus' name is known as *Cristóbal Colón.* The citation reflects this.

narrator perceives as misleading and unhealthy for the *yudisco*/Moroccan subject population. The intention of the narrator is less to portray the defenders as saviors than as to illustrate the relationship that he perceives of needing to be truncated. The conception of the European foreigners as defenders puts them on a savior-like platform that resonates with the idea of a people coming from the heavens. From the beginning of the story, there is a smooth continuity in the master narrative from the European point of view as the conquistadors as saviors and in the presentation of the Spanish/Burwilaschian troops as defenders, who have come to save the otherwise helpless people of Yudis/Morocco. However, this point of view of the Spanish as superior and as being welcomed as such into non-European lands will be flipped belly-up in the narrator-protagonist's tale. Like any good storyteller he is setting up the ultimate twist. The warm welcome at the beginning of the narrative will later devolve into a rather cold goodbye near the end. But first a discussion of the devil, since the presence of a foreign and unwanted body is what ultimately ties both stories together, as befits the title of Daoudi's novel itself. This presence of a foreign body later figures prominently in the discussion of burial in the narrative.

At the beginning of the metanarrative, the narrator presents the devil as a malicious being that either resides on the island or is disguised as someone else (possessing their body). Like colonialism itself, one notices the idea of bodies being possessed and penetrated by another. Or it can be understood in the individual sense, where a human subject's body is possessed (as in Western narratives such as *The Exorcist*) by another entity. Implicit in the search for this devil is the idea of putting down

a threat, of stemming a tide of evil that could threaten not only Yudis/Morocco, but consequently Burwilasch/Europe, a threat which General Federico Puertas conceives in terms of: "no sólo las consecuencias mortales que padecería la isla de Yudis, sino la posterior amenaza que alcanzaría también a los habitantes del continente de Burwilasch (*Diablo* 5)." The threat, of course, is that some sort of devil, currently in some undisclosed location of Yudis, could find a way into neighboring Burwilasch. This discourse resembles, and also mocks, the dominant perspective on migration being employed in Southern European Countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece. María Luisa Peñalva Vélez writes that

> En el contexto migratorio actual, las lógicas de identificación/ diferenciación actúan definiendo al "otro" como el "extranjero", que viene a "invadir" las fronteras físicas de la Europa Comunitaria pero también las interiores, aquellas que configuraron los Estados-Nación modernos, como la cultura, las costumbres, la lengua, la historia, etc. La 'amenaza física' (la invasión del territorio) y la 'amenaza identitaria', basada en el fundamentalismo cultural (el 'otro' es incompatible con nuestra cultura) son dos nociones que acompañan a la imagen del 'otro' presentada por los medios de comunicación. (136)

Comparing the immigrant to the devil is a recycled rhetorical device that is common in xenophobic thought. But the spread of the devil from Yudis into Burwilasch finds its basis for bilateral support in the sociopolitical reality that is found in both regions. Yudis

is obviously the country that welcomes the penetration of its external borders by Burwilaschian troops arriving onto its territory: it is dependent upon the latter's protection. As in any colonial relationship, there is the issue of economic dependency which betrays the financial continuity of colonial domination, such as portrayed in novels by other Moroccan contemporaries like Saïd Jdidi in *Precintado* (2003) or in *Grito primal* (2000). The situation between the two fictional countries parallels that which is found between Spain and Morocco. Using this contemporary relationship between Spain and Morocco as a contextual foundation, one can better understand the imagery of the burial of European-like forces by quicksand in Daoudi's novel.

The civilizing mission of the Burwilaschian troops represents a modern force for humanitarian assistance, an assistance that Edward Said notes as being, in its objectives, very far from its so-called benevolent concerns. As the noted critic of orientalism observes, "Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort" (*Orientalism* xxi). In the case of Burwilasch, it is a chance for the reassertion of European hegemony and control in the face of *yudisco/*Moroccan "helplessness," a trait that has been exaggerated so that European countries can differentiate themselves from Africa. As Mbembe has written, "Africa is always pretext for a comment about something else" (*On the Postcolony* 3) and that "something else" would be how Europe is superior to Africa and how Spain, within this context, is European by way of its colonial dominion over Morocco. Flesler has

referred to this as "an old anxiety about Spain's belonging to Europe" (*The Return of The Moor* 19).

One can also see here an illustration of how desperately certain social and political classes of Morocco are anxious, too, about the Maghrebi country's relationship to Europe. We see this anxiety in the form of Kamal Abderrazak, who later becomes the King of Yudis. With the support of the King of Yudis, the F.I.I. (Intermediate Intervention Force) service units are deployed to the extreme southern region of the nation. The tacit support of the King for the forces is described as follows: "el ex-mayordomo Kamal Abderrazak insistió en desterrar cualquier posibilidad de peligro de la isla de Yudis, explicando que deseaba una paz duradera para la isla (80)." This rhetoric of desiring "una paz duradera para la isla" sounds like an autocrat's apologetic speech to foreign invasion, justifying the civilizing mission *for* the non-national troops. The fact that he is the (for the moment) reigning king of Yudis legitimizes the incursion of the defenders further into *yudisco* territory. The invading "other" in this narration is speaking through the King. Daoudi's narrative is well aware of this contradiction. With the legitimizing blessing of the local native, we can recall Spivak's mentioning of the "buffer group" (2118) of a local, but obedient, group of autochthonous elite who are willing to uphold the colonial enterprise of the dominant and foreign minority, such as happened with the British *Raj* in India.

It is with the King's blessing that the troops, led by Federico Puertas and Julio Romero de Santa Bárbara, go south to trek towards Witwatersrand, where the devil is supposedly lurking. As one continues to read, one finds that the devil supposedly is to be

found underground. It is here that the reader encounters the idea of an entity to be found, not on the surface, but somewhere buried below it. Once the troops arrive into Witwatersrand, where the devil has supposedly moved off to, a conversation follows in which another local reveals exactly where, topographically speaking, the devil is. The discourse remains consistent with that of the defenders "saving" a people from some unsavory devil, which falls in line very well with neocolonial rhetoric:

> -¿Viene para averiguar si el diablo vive con nosotros?
>
> -No exactamente; venimos para salvarles del diablo.
>
> -Pues yo nunca he visto a ningún diablo.-
>
> -Ya; a veces es invisible.
>
> -Sí, eso dicen las brujas de este pueblo. Tenemos una montaña habitada por espíritus malignos; nadie se acerca a ella. (85)

There is some subtle humor here employed by narrator. When the representative of the F.I.I. articulates the mission to the town local (actually the town governor) as "venimos para salvarles del diablo," the governor reacts in a hilariously dumbfounded manner, underscoring the unnecessary nature of the humanitarian project when he responds, in a deadpan fashion, "Pues yo nunca he visto a ningún diablo" followed by the even more ridiculous response by the F.I.I. official where he has to articulate, defensively, that the devil never would have been seen anyway, due to the fact that it is "invisible." In a single conversation the entire neocolonial project is thrown up in the air as being full of logical holes. One is reminded here of attempts by the autocrats and leaders propped up by

Western governments to proclaim freedom and independence where in reality there is none.

The fact that a subject completely unfamiliar with the customs of the local cultures can come in to the town of Witwatersrand and flatly say that there is a "devil" in their midst is presumptuous at the very least. The town governor offers an ascertained and veiled criticism of foreign occupation, particularly of this dubious ability of the outsider to determine the existence of a devil occupying the island of Yudis. This tongue-in-cheek criticism is evident when the governor replies to the outsider's comment that there is an invisible devil, saying, "Sí, eso dicen las brujas de este pueblo." The governor's response is a possible critique of a blind faith in what one hears and reads on and in the news. From this perspective, the governor is showing support for the idea of locally-based news, spread by word of mouth: his words mark a connection to the Moroccan oral tradition, whereby local news is spread vis-a-vis the act of storytelling or by the explicit relaying of objective facts.[45] The emphasis on locality, and the quality of information outsiders receive from far away, is a strategy for breaking from hegemonical news outlets that often spread erroneous and dangerously inaccurate information about North African realities. Mignolo writes:

> Without such macronarratives told from the historical experiences of multiple local histories, it would be imposible to break the dead end against which modern epistemology and the reconfiguration of the social sciences and the humanities since the eighteenth century

[45] Of particular note regarding the importance of oral storytelling in Morocco is Mohamed Azirar's newspaper-published serial novel *Kaddour "el fantasioso."*

have framed hegemonic forms of knowledge. (*Local Histories/ Global Designs* 22)

The dialogue between the local townsperson, in this case the governor, and the soldier (considered an outsider), points to a distrust toward information that is not immediately sourced in the local events and affairs of Moroccan towns that are normally ignored by the former colonial metropolises of Europe. But it is also in this dialogue that the foreign troops are tipped off to the possibility that the "devil" in Yudis resides in a volcano just outside of Witwatersrand. As with the graves mentioned earlier, this too is an underground location. The neocolonial troops gather their gear and their know-how and carry on to the crater of the local volcano. The narrator compares the volcano's crater to that of a grave:

> En la montaña del pueblo de Witwatersrand todo el mundo estaba alerta. Eran las seis y cuarenta y siete minutos cuando los soldados apuntaron hacia la gran fosa de la cima. Esperaban la señal de su general para disparar. Tras valorar rápidamente la posición de sus soldados, el general Federico Puertas dio luz verde para atacar al diablo que se escondía allí.
>
> Después de casi una hora de intenso bombardeo, el general dio la orden de alto el fuego. Con los disparos concentrados en lo más hondo y oscuro del cráter, no se produjo ninguna reacción del diablo, ni de vida ni de muerte. La fosa sólo devolvía el eco de los disparos que se enterraban en ella. (102)

In this narrative we see an entire discourse of burial, from the mention of *fosa* to that of the bullets burying themselves inside of it ("los disparos que se enterraban en ella"). The echoes of the gunshots function as a sort of return, an echo of a past that will not go away, a sort of aural memory where the sounds of violence in the colonial past return. Inverted in this scene is that of the ghostly return - not of the Moor on the Spanish shore but rather of a ghostly return of (Spanish) colonialism, on the North African shore. The troops fire away, but they do not see their reflection -- they hear it. The crater functions as a living reminder that here is "the devil." Not a demonized entity from the colonial perspective, but rather from the colonized perspective. These sounds of the echoing bullets haunt the present, and their sound acts as a voice. In her writings on trauma, Caruth has observed how sounds often can act as "a voice," Caruth observes, "that is paradoxically released *through the wound*" (*Unclaimed Experience* 2). Colonialism, of course is a traumatic wound that unites both the Burwilashian troops and the people of Yudis, if we read these countries as signifiers of Europe and Morocco.

Sandra Martín discusses the constant repetition of a historical wound being reopened again and again throughout modern Spanish/Moroccan history:

> La historia moderna y contemporánea no ha sido propicia para la recuperación de la herida histórica que ha sido reabierta muchas veces. En 1859-1860, España interviene militarmente en Marruecos en la llamada Guerra de África, que culmina en la toma de Tetuán […] los dos países se volvieron a enfrentar en 1893 y en 1909 en Melilla, y poco después, en 1911-1912, en el Rif. En

1912, España y Francia establecieron el Protectorado sobre

Marruecos hasta la independencia del país en 1956. (25)

If one understands the history between Morocco and Spain, they will see that the hole, or "fosa," is a place of memory, and that if the Spaniards (or Burwilaschians) perceive that there is a "devil" within the hole, then there is something in that memory which needs to be purged; something must depart. What Freud wrote on the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich* is relevant here; colonialism here is an inversion of immigration. The narrator is playing with the concepts of guest and host by showing the discomfort of the Spanish/ Burwilaschian army trying to make itself at home in the island of Yudis/Morocco.

We return, briefly, to the narrator-protagonist. As an immigrant who has been rejected, shunned and deported by Spanish authorities in his two previous attempts to cross over into Spain, the narrator-protagonist is, in a way, seeking revenge on his former host by reclaiming power in the only way he can; by spinning a fictional story where anything he says goes. The narrator has sole control over the content of the story as he sees fit. This is related to trauma. As Caruth writes, trauma is a mental wounding "not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature […] returns to haunt the survivor later on" (*Unclaimed Experiences* 4). This unassimilated trauma can also return, and to purge himself of the haunting, to dispossess himself of a trauma, the narrator can relate a story which helps him reclaim power not only for himself but also for others like him, as a way of departing toward what Caruth calls "a newly established future" (*Unclaimed Experiences* 14), one free of the stigma of colonization and of having internalized

Eurocentric myths spread amongst the subjects of colonial empire. As stated earlier, the narrator's appropriation of the story is a purging act that allows the narrator, a victim of coloniality, to detach himself of its possession.

Once the narrator-protagonist tells his story in the plaza, something quite subversive happens in the Bujlud plaza that is due to the community's history that is implicity based in orality. As Walter J. Ong (1982) makes clear, when a human subject speaks out in front of an audience, a sort of community is established, only broken once anything written (such as a pamphlet, newspaper or other such text) is passed out for individual thought (72). The emotional interaction and reception to the storytelling makes what is heard in the plaza both unique and directional. Listeners take their cues from what what is being said, how it is being said, and the manner with which others in the audience are taking the conveyed message. While of course each individual will have their own interpretation that does not wholely resemble what others understand, the fact that all heard the same story in the same space and time and under the same sociopolitical context will create a communal experience of storytelling. The anticolonial undertones of the story can be threatening to the State order precisely because the underlying message of the story will carry clout with the rest of the members in the surrounding crowd-circle. His storytelling incites others to understand the State as a controlling and oppressive apparatus.

Daoudi's idea of selecting a Moroccan migrant to tell the story *and* to have the story of the narrator in Spanish allows the migrant protagonist to communicate to a Spanish-speaking public, or as Caruth would write regarding trauma, storytelling "allows

them [Spaniards and Moroccans] to communicate, across the gap between their cultures and their experiences, precisely through what they do not comprehend" (*Unclaimed Expreriences* 14) which is their shared historical trauma. Writing strictly about trauma and human psychology, Caruth goes on to mention that "Their ability to speak and to listen…. does not rely…on what they simply know of one another, but on what they do not fully know in their own traumatic pasts" (14). What the narrator cannot fully divulge is a history that he can only know indirectly in spite of his real-world experiences of having witnessed death, poverty and exclusion: it is a history that he cannot fully know except in the capacity of the other to listen to what it is he has to say. He can only move on, or "rebury" (à la Brogan) a past which has been left open for too long, from the time of the establishment of the Spanish-Moroccan War to the present. He can rebury the oft-unspoken history of coloniality with the attentive listening of his colonial other, the Spaniards.

Pierre Janet's idea that story-telling allows for an assimilation of trauma and therefore resolves it by exorcising a possessing past (qtd. in Brogan 80) can help point toward the motives of the narrator to tell a story whereby a devil, lurking supposedly below the earth, can later consume the invading forces. Indeed, Caruth notes that trauma is where the outside goes in while the penetrated body is unprepared, and the F.I.I. forces are certainly a force from the outside of Yudis' geographically-recognized national body. The narrator commonly chooses to use the word "forasteros" on many occasions to refer to the Burwilaschian forces. And true, they were invited by the leaders of Yudis onto the island. But this leaves the reader to wonder about the original occupation: for example,

what of the history that is left unspoken by the narrator, a period of time that took place before the manifestation of the "devil" in Yudis? Additionally, nothing is said about the Spanish and French incursions into Morocco in the nineteenth century, which had overt lasting effects into the twentieth century. And whose memory still remains etched in the minds of present-day Moroccans? And what of the memories of having migrated to the former "protector" Spain, who now leaves the immigrants to the luck of being deported by the Guardia Civil? The "answer" comes in the form of flexing one's muscle through the spinning of a tale whereby Burwilaschian/Spanish forces are left helpless, scared and buried mysteriously by a land that consumes them.

The Burwilaschian/Spanish forces themselves are a repetition, a haunting, a ghost of past colonial efforts in Morocco/Yudis. This echo of the past is what brings about the echo of gunshots in the volcano's opening, which in its portrait as a "fosa" makes it what Brogan would call an "open grave" of a past and trauma that still has not been shut (91). Curiously, the Spanish/ Burwilaschian forces begin to suspect that there is an underground creek within the *fosa* where the devil is lurking, and they decide to delve into this underground grotto in order to map out the demon's lair. The troops decide to "conseguir una información más precisa sobre el estado interior de la fosa" (102). Using the modern instruments of domination, of scientific exploration and other quantifiable measurements, one of the troops begins to explore a region deep within, where he is able to see "un hueco tapado con una gran piedra y que detrás del hueco se oía un ruido extraño" (102). The river buried by the rock is representative of a latent unconscious which yearns to be free: this is thus an appropriate location for the devil, an imaginary

entity that, Ana Rueda writes, evades "la política de países que recurren a la violencia del Estado para solucionar un mal desconocido, misterioso e invisible" (71). The devil is simply any entity, national or otherwise, that threatens these states simply because it is "misterioso e invisible." Anything new or different that does not resemble the established order can, then, be construed as diabolical. Freedom from neocolonial influence becomes a threat imagined as a devil.

The river is the metaphoric signifier of an undiscovered unconscious desire to be free from colonial domination. However this desire is under threat by the Burwilaschian attempting to gain control over the deepest recesses of the mind of the locals ("el estado interior de la fosa," 102). One recalls that the Burwilaschian forces are made up of a team of variegated scientists, and therefore the reader cannot disregard the similarity with Ileana Rodríguez's analysis of the colonial mapping and the re-ordering of native lands. Rodríguez comments on the West's particular take on geography, writing:

> Geography is anything and everything that is extractable– minerals, precious woods, vegetable products, animals. Geography is everything that helps the understanding of valleys, mountains, general and specific climatic conditions, altitude, extension…the work of geographers is one that curiously overlooks all the impediments encountered. Their aim is the accuracy of description of a landscape whose beauty resides more in its future possibilities than in the existing ones. (*Transatlantic Topographies* 152)

The continuous probing of *yudisco* land by the military forces is a reminder of the colonial ventures of the past: an obsession with the docility of the land and the indigenous people, who, like the devil, "must be disposed of" (Rodríguez 138). The re-invasion is also a bodily probe of the deepest of interiors–that is, the mind or *fosa*- whereby, if Rodríguez wrote separately (and not on Daoudi's text) of a land's "diverse topography, fertile valleys, elevated plains, terraced mountains" (138), one could also talk of a bodily topography. Weaving the topographies into one, the crater being explored by the troops can be seen as an intrusion into the mind of the native people, of a "black hole" in the mind that has not healed enough to effectively "rebury" the past and move on into a truly independent present. The troops' probing is also a repetition, in geographical and topographical terms, of the colonial exploits of the past during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where the space in a geographical body had been occupied by a foreign outsider. Here the memories of an overt colonial past are recycled in the form of a supposedly benign humanitarian force which coincidentally finds that it *must* intervene in the affairs of Yudis. This is why the troops' general is obsessed with thinking of the mission as "una gran labor humanitaria" (112).

It is important to the study of colonial trauma and human psychology to also note that that soldier, once deep into the earth in order to comprehend the interior state of the cavity or "fosa," hears a noise which is,

> de un caudaloso río que recorría las profundidades de la montaña.
> El general lo comprobó media hora después de introducir de nuevo
> a sus comandos con herramientas especiales para derrumbar la

> piedra que tapaba el hueco. Entonces el general concluyó que el diablo podía haber escapado por el cauce [d]el río. Nadie sabía ni por dónde venía el río ni a dónde se dirigía. La tarea de los defensores se vio así complicada. (*Diablo* 102)

The "devil" is in the details: which way would a truly independent geohistorical region (i.e., the nation-state of Morocco/Yudis) really go? The narrator presents this more complete freedom from colonial dominion as the real threat to the Spain/Europe/ Burwilasch. The narrator is implying that the ex-colonial powers, advancing further into the country ("para perforar el corazón de la tierra" 81), would no longer be able to control the "cauce del río." The narrator's tale insinuates that underneath the surface of a country and people spoiled and divided by colonial maneuvers, there moves about a free-flowing river whose direction "nadie sabía ni por dónde venía […] ni a dónde se dirigía." The river below, underneath all the weight of the earth, represents an uncontrolled, uncharted territory; a region which has *not* been mapped and topographically subjected by European powers since the so-called "Scramble for Africa" which resulted from the Berlin Conference of 1884.

This unmapped river and its flow can also be thought of as a moving dynamic, such as the "flow" discourse of migrants which pass between two (or more) locations, as Ana Rueda writes: "Existe un discurso en torno a la inmigración que suele recurrir al tropo de la "invasión" árabe con el ánimo de establecer una analogía histórica con el flujo de inmigrantes en España" (60). However, this "flujo," carefully being watched by the F.I.I. troops, can be an invasion of a sort not spoken of by Spain and the other European

ex-colonial powers: the trope of invasion can be used by Spaniards to speak of immigrants but also, in this story, by a migrant to identify the invasion of neocolonial forces. As the sole *cuentista*, the narrator-protagonist can tell the story as he pleases, and it becomes very evident that the traditional power balance (where Spain/Burwilasch holds the upper hand) is inverted. Here the Moroccan migrant can choose what happens; all of Burwilasch as represented by the F.I.I. is dependent upon his narration, and indeed, in this story, it is the colonial forces that are weakened, even fearful, especially in the scene that takes place in a thick jungle between the towns of Witwatersrand and Fresnillo. After spending six months in Witwatersrand (and *not* locating the devil), the troops move out toward the latter town, and take four months to do so.

The narrator describes the troops' nightmarish voyage to get to Fresnillo: "Después de una semana de descanso en Fresnillo, los soldados a duras penas se recuperaban del horror que habían padecido durante su travesía por la selva. Una selva de sucesos extraños, difíciles de concebir de fenómenos inexplicables que nunca habían imaginado los defensores (110)." It is crucial to read this above citation knowing that contemporary Spanish discourse has for a long time spoken for Africans as if they are victims of the forces of nature. In other words they were deterministically dragged into their problems with poverty and political corruption, and have no sense of initiative whatsoever. According to an unidentified *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) member of the Spanish Congress:

> They extradite themselves to the sea, to the mercy of an uncertain crossing, or they are trapped in the nets of scrupulous mafias for a

> very simple and at the same time terrible reason: because the conditions of war, misery, hunger […] act on these men, women and children as a real, powerful and inevitable expulsion effect. (qtd. in Kleiner-Liebau 155)

The particular inaccuracy here is how misery, hunger and war "act on" African migrants.

This construction, framing African migrants as victims of the forces of nature, is essentialist and assumes that the people of Morocco are genetically predisposed to this form of living: that living in extreme conditions are naturally, and inherently, their modus operandi. By this logic the disasters that befall them are accountable to no one or any world system-- instead, the suffering was preordained and teleological, mostly because the people from the African continent do not have any concept of self or individual identity. Events simply happen and the Maghrebi just gets inevitably dragged along into the chaos. We will find in the scene of the jungle that European troops, interestingly enough, are susceptible to the very same "conditions" which likewise act upon them in their very own "uncertain crossing" of Yudisian territory. Thus the nature of suffering in Morocco is not particularly genetic, nor predetermined, and it cannot be argued as such by Europeans in order to absolve their part in the realities that have survived colonialism. Daoudi's portrayal of the Burwilaschians' journey through the jungle demythologizes the superiority of the Spanish other.

The general sense of fear and disorientation which can be found throughout the narration in this jungle scene suggests that the Burwilaschian troops (and by extension the "blue berets" and the NATO forces which stem from Europe) are in way over their

heads and are not, in the end, welcome in their attempts to extract "evil" from a land to which they themselves are foreigners. This "travesía," or crossing through the jungle, parallels in many ways with a much more well-known "travesía," just as dangerous, covered in all the major Spanish press outlets: the crossing of the Strait. This is why the sea is often signified as a locus of death. But here the neocolonial saviors of the humanitarian mission will live out the trauma. They will suffer both burial and subsequent loss of voice when they trek through the jungle. One by one the tanks that form the civilizing enterprise will disappear:

> las divertidas anécdotas del viaje se acabaron al desaparecer dos tanques sin el mínimo ruido. Al comprobarlo, el general Federico Puertas consideró a los pilotos de los tanques como desertores. Era impensable que desertasen sin motivo en medio de una gran selva, pero el hecho no tenía otra explicación. Así, el general decidió seguir la marcha sin intentar buscarlos. (111)

What appears to first be a desertion by troops underscores the silence, or lack of voice, amongst the troops. The muffling of voices which much earlier are associated with the poor of the Tukadi Dos ghetto and with the Guaschusch in the cemetery here are applied to the powerful forces of Spain/Burwilasch. As the narrator explains, the two tanks disappeared "sin el mínimo ruido." In fact, the lack of noise, or protest, is such that the General decides not to focus too much on the issue and to "seguir la marcha sin intentar buscarlos." The residue of colonialism is buried without a trace, as more tanks begin to disappear. This is why the general "observó que no pudo haberse dirigido a ningún lado

porque no había huellas de sus ruedas" (111). Colonialism and its phantasmagoric presence are being wiped out by an even more phantasmagoric presence–the general begins to fear that the devil is among them.

Here we have an inversion of roles, where the colonial power is exposed in all its weaknesses. The general begins to feel "por primera vez en su vida un misterioso miedo. Un miedo que le envenenaba" (111).[46] His fear will fulfill itself, as more tanks disappear. However, he also learns the reason as to why they are disappearing- quicksand. In one particular passage the scene of tanks being swallowed by the sand come to resemble a burial in strong fashion:

> Nadie pudo aseverar nada, hasta que se repitió el mismo incidente.
> Sin embargo, esta vez el general comprendió como desaparecían.
> Vio cómo tres camiones repletos de soldados se ahogaban en la
> tierra, en una fosa que se abría para enterrar a los vehículos.
> Los soldados que los ocupaban no dispusieron de tiempo suficiente
> para salir de ellos. Los que gritaban fueron succionados y los que
> intentaban salir se quedaron medio enterrados al principio, pero
> luego la tierra les absorbió a todos. El suceso no duró más de unos
> instantes; la tierra lo cubrió todo milagrosamente. (*Diablo* 112)

[46] This fear that the Spaniards feel on foreign land, and the role-reversal evident here, where the colonizers are debilitated, has been noted by others, notably Mercedes Serna in her introduction in which she writes about Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios.* In Daoudi's text, the land army reveals a sort of shipwreck of its own, but on land. See *Crónicas de Indias*, p. 91.

The burying of the troops by quicksand, which recalls the earlier scene with the Guaschusch in the graveyard, is a direct result of General Puerta's decision to cross the expanse of Yudis by land.

The difference between the Guaschusch graveyard scene and this later one is that in the former the land falls in onto the subjects, whereas in the latter situation the Spanish/Burwilaschian subjects fall into the land. There appears to be a vertical consistency in this novel, a hierarchy that can be illustrative of the difference in positionality of the buried subjects. This imagery of the burial of invading colonial forces is an effective way of contradicting Spanish discourse on immigration, where the "Moor" has traditionally been depicted as the invader. Flesler writes, "This homogenizing discourse has become a frequent response to the perceived threat that immigration poses to national integrity. In this context, old binary oppositions such as that of the Moor as 'invader' versus the Christian as 'invaded' have reemerged" (*The Return of The Moor* 57). In Daoudi's text something new is happening: a historical consciousness not afraid to assimilate itself and testify to the new colonialism, the new invasion, not of the "Moors" as so discussed in the Spanish press but of a new type of invasion, one carried out in the name of globalized, so-called "universal" European values and commercial interests. As much as the new enterprise, done under the guise of "defending" Yudis/Morocco, represents a continuation of Spanish colonization, its burial in the narration of the halqa's story is a form of acknowledging the ghosts of colonialism which haunt the current civilizing mission, recognizing in the present "that the past is not closed and solved"

(Flesler 57). The narrative is a revival of something that in current neoliberal discourse has been, like Marxism, "rendered ghostly" (Flesler 57).

Official discourses must always be challenged because their totalization of the historical narrative necessarily excises other points of view that undermine a dominant group's hegemony over all others. The Strait of Gibraltar can be both a point of unification and of separation, a bridge and a border. While historically it has always been an important and contested space in Iberian history, African perspectives on that contested space have long been left out of the "dialogue" on immigration and international relations. Texts such as Daoudi's *Diablo* connect the world of literature to the real-world debate on borders, identities, self, and otherness in the European Union, and on the U.S.-Mexican border. By illustrating the particular circumstances of the power relationship between Spain and Morocco, it makes it possible to open up a discussion that as of recent also includes Turkey's failed attempts to join the EU, as well as the debate on Muslim and European identity that flared up in France in 2003 over the use of religious symbols. Despite the idea that Spain wedded itself to modernity by joining Europe, one must also realize that the Iberian nation has also become a player in the globalized world precisely by learning how to work with the issue of migration, an issue which almost every "developed" and "industrialized" country in North America and Europe is experiencing at the moment that this chapter is being written. One hopes that this investigation into burial and otherness can lead to studies in voice and representation in other European literatures and media, where it is sorely needed. After all, the face of

Europe is changing, and each of its member nations are also confronting dramatic changes.

Like the common media, literature, often constructed as a highbrow genre that is apart from history, is a product of the society in which it is borne. But it also contributes to molding society. While Daoudi's novel may have an agenda of its own, namely, addressing the state of immigration from a Moroccan point of view, it also deconstructs the perspectives of who historically has been the "other" in its shared Andalusian *convivencia*[47] – Spaniards. Spain in recent years has been constructing its European identity by ventriloquizing a 'straw man' argument of Africa–as a weak, poor region that cannot handle its own affairs. In *Diablo* the trope of burial reveals the nature of political maneuvering that is deployed to keep post-independence Moroccans in servitude and in submission to an idea of Spain that, closely examined, does not objectively exist.

[47] Shared living situation – cohabitation. Living amongst others (All my definition).

Chapter 3

Djambe, Burial, and the Deconstruction of Spanish Modernity in Donato Ndongo's *El metro*

"You live on the blood of my people/Everyone knows you've come to steal/You come like the thieves in the night/The whole world is ready to fight" –Thievery Corporation ft. Fela Kuti, "Vampires"

There is a classic trope in literature, music, and in painting where death is presented as a source that nourishes the regeneration of a region, a people, or a specific country.[48] The Equatoguinean author Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo writes in his novel *El metro* (2007) that "la muerte no es sino el abono que facilita la germinación de la vida" (136). In this chapter, I will analyze how the imagery of burial is deliberately deployed in order to reveal innovative ways of using sociopolitical agency in order to fight against a *djambe*, or witchcraft, that perpetuates a dangerous and masculinist understanding of modernity. In order to further my arguments, I will be drawing extensively from two studies that I believe can open up new avenues in understanding and interpreting Ndongo's text, namely Peter Geschiere's *The Modernity of Witchcraft* (1995) and Néstor García Canclini's *Hybrid Cultures* (1990). I have chosen these two theoretical approaches because they make an excellent connection between the sort of sorcery and magic that the novel's various characters encounter when burial occurs in the text, while also approaching the unique issues that are germane to the main protagonist Lambert Obama Ondo's upbringing in his native Mbalmayo, Cameroon. At the same time, both Canclini and Geschiere take two seemingly unrelated aspects of migrant reality, the subway and *djambe*, and relate them to the reasons that a migrant would leave Africa for Spain.

[48] A perfect example is Diego Rivera's 1926 fresco, *Revolución y Germinación.*

Readers who are confronted with Ndongo's text will find six unique burials that are repulsive and yet beautiful: in any event they are memorable because they stand out for their dramatic unfolding and theatricality. These burials are not just incidental- not in a novel that addresses the urgency of migrant deaths at a time when the Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, has decided that the Mediterranean is quickly becoming a *de facto* cemetery.[49] The urgency of migration continues to build, and as scholars, activists and citizens ask themselves what they can do about the situation, it becomes crucial to talk about the nature of the societ(ie)s in which we live. For those of us in the West, and I am referring to Europe and the United States, part of the answer lies in taking a critical look at the assumptions that uphold the present understanding of modernity. Curiously enough, Canclini defines modernity in a fashion that is highly compatible with the Madrid metro, the novel's namesake. Canclini suggests that a modern city is a locus where one enters "via the path of the cultured, of the popular, or of the massified. On the inside, everything gets mixed together" (*Hybrid Cultures* 3). He even defines it as a space where one might find migrants who "cross the city in many directions and, precisely at the intersections, install their baroque stands of regional candies and contraband radios, medicinal herbs and videocassettes" (3). So one can conclude that modernity is itself a *mélange*, often cosmopolitan and urban in nature. This mix includes people of not only different races, ethnicities, and cultures, but also from different socioeconomic classes

[49] In October of 2013, BBC News (Portuguese version) discussed the Prime Minister's words, after he had observed that, "Como as coisas estão, estamos construindo um cemitério dentro do nosso Mar Mediterrâneo." (BBC News Online http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2013/10/131012_malta_lampedusa_rp)

and experiences. Canclini's description fits very well with the space represented by the title of Ndongo's text. The underground train station is where, similar to the candy stands and contraband radios, one can find migrants such as Obama Ondo selling goods to passersby. The subway is where people of all different backgrounds, the "cultured" rich and the "popular" poor come together. Distinct classes, races, and genders are temporarily united in a space where they can enter and exit. It is the center to which all arrive and from which all leave. But the subway can also be a space that is haunted by *djambe,* what Geschiere defines as "a small being that lives inside the belly of its possessor" (38). In layman's terms *djambe* is essentially witchcraft (Geschiere 26), but it basically functions as a way of establishing order in the house, usually within a certain domestic sphere. This idea of a destabilized *locus domesticus* is appropriate, because the domestic realm has been the traditional space for women, and in this chapter we will be examining how *djambe* can also be used to counter hegemonic masculinities in the home, whether or not the locus is an actual physical house or a reference an actual nation-state level. In scrupulously examining the six different burials, I will show the connection burial has to both modernity and gender politics, and how burial as a practice can negotiate the rigidity of gender roles such that Africans can achieve a modernity that is positive for their localities and realities. Before delving into the issues regarding burial in *Metro*, however, I will first talk about the author himself, in order to properly contextualize his work.

Ndongo is a writer who currently resides in Spain. He has spent a lot of time traveling and teaching outside of his native Equatorial Guinea, which since independence

in 1968 has suffered the autocratic dictatorships of Francisco Macías Nguema and Teodoro Obiang Nguema (the latter is Macías' nephew, who took the throne in a coup d'etat in 1979 and as of the writing of this chapter remains the current president). Ndongo's writings and their critical and dark portrayal of postcolonial Africa have driven the writer into exile, giving him a strong reason to identify with the current reality of African migrants leaving devastation and economic hardship in their homelands for Spain and Europe. Sent by his family in the late 1960s to Spain, Ndongo studied at university and then began writing for the Spanish press, including the famous *ABC* newspaper and then other agencies such as *Indice, Mundo Negro, Historia 16* and *Diario 16* (Michael Ugarte 59). Ndongo did not return to Equatorial Guinea until 1985, where he stayed until 1992. By 1994, the political situation in his home country had become so intense that he returned to Spain, where he has been living ever since (Ugarte 60). Ndongo has had to put up with death threats from members of the regime for his criticism of its post-independence leadership (Ugarte 58; Personal Interview 16 July 2013). Even so, his courage to continue writing on the state of affairs in Equatorial Guinea is demonstrative of his on-going engagement with his country. His writings belong to a documented historical period of Guinean letters, a generation known as the "Exiled Generation," specifically those writers who wrote in another country due to self- or externally-imposed exile. As Mbomio Bacheng observes,

> There are basically three main generations of literary expression in Equatorial Guinea. […] They are: the Elder Generation (colonial period 1900-1968), the Exiled Generation (1968-1985) and

Contemporary Generation (after 1985). (qtd. by Marvin Lewis x-xi)

As Lewis contextualizes Equatoguinean literature, he writes that Ndongo, along with his colleagues María Nsue Angue and Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, is one "of the better-known authors due to the amount of critical attention devoted to their works in the United States" (qtd. in *An Introduction to the Literature of Equatorial Guinea* xi). Ndongo himself began writing extensively in the seventies, mainly as a journalist, but he is most well-known for a trifecta of novels that he began writing in the eighties: *Las tinieblas de tu memoria negra* (1987), *Los poderes de la tempestad* (1997), and *El metro* (2007). It is crucial to understand that movement in the form of crossing national boundaries is a constant in all three of his works, which embrace the theme of migration. All three texts create a rather unflattering image of modern-day Africa, of Equatorial Guinea in the first two texts and then of Cameroon in the final one. They are critical not of black African culture itself, which the author often portrays in a positive light, but rather of the destruction of local culture that coloniality and European modernity have wrought on the people of these two black African countries. In this sense I would like to point out an important nuance in Ndongo's oeuvre: his work does not run from modernity in the changes it has brought on our conceptions of culture, gender, race, class, and technology- in fact, it is part of this chapter's goal to emphasize how Ndongo is actually embracing a certain new sense of modernity, one in which African subjects take on an active role in changing Europe for the better, thus de-centering Europe's universalizing project to keep the so-called colonial "savages" up to pace with a white and Eurocentric world.

In *El metro,* one encounters the fictional trajectory of the young Lambert Obama Ondo who, raised in the rural village of Mbalmayo in Cameroon, finds himself upset with outdated traditions that will not allow him to marry his sweetheart. Angry with the absolute adherence to "unas formas de pensar y un modo de vivir que no se correspondían con la simple realidad" (172), he leaves his town and migrates north, working his way up by struggling through several jobs, first in Yaundé (Cameroon), then Douala (Cameroon), followed by Dakar (Senegal), El Aaiun (Morocco), Arrecife (Spain's Canary Islands), Madrid (Peninsular, mainland Spain), Murcia (Southeast Spain), and then finally back in Madrid again, where the novel ends. The novel commences *in medias res*, near the end of Obama Ondo's life, in Madrid's Lucero metro stop. The narrative then stops and rewinds back two generations, to the time of the protagonist's grandfather. From there, the story unfolds in Cameroon, accompanying the life and events of Obama Ondo's family, and soon describes the protagonist's intense but exciting personal odyssey from Africa to Spain. The narration is in the omniscient third-person voice, and the reader learns of the character's struggles and hardships as he travels through the African continent looking for an exit to Europe.

3.1 Exiting Colonized Space

The structure of *El metro* allows readers to play with the definition of entering and exiting a certain space, a structure which by itself makes itself relevant to Canclini's writings on entering and exiting/leaving modernity. This is Ndongo's idea of satiring the idea that modernity even has a time and place. In a way, the title of the novel is entirely

appropriate, because from a certain perspective the entire novel revolves around the metro, and its particular space in time. The metro gives structure to how the reader, accompanying Obama Ondo, enters and exits the novel. It is just as Canclini describes entering and exiting the Mexican Museum of National Anthropology: "Whichever of the two itineraries [for entrance] is followed, it is clear that the central hall, situated at the rear of the building […], is the most outstanding. […] [T]he bringing together of thousands of testimonies from all over Mexico attests to the triumph of the centralist project, announcing that here the intercultural synthesis is produced" (123). In other words, the architectural rhetorical that shapes contemporary Mexico City as the natural and most refined outcome of centuries of Olmec, Aztec, and later of Spanish rule by putting it structurally in the center of the museums exhibit, serves the modern political classes' biased interests in presenting history and hegemony as natural, logical, and as the necessary end of history. As we will see later in this chapter, the parallels between the Mexico City anthropology museum's hegemonic teleology and the presentation in *El metro* of the subway station as a sort of museum are quite disturbing. But Ndongo's decision to begin the novel *in medias res* subverts Spain's presence as the center of modernity, and instead serves as a narrative device to dethrone Spanish modernity and "universality" and to reinstate unfinished traveling from Africa to Europe (the migrant's ongoing odyssey) as a more viable form of modernity. After all, the novel begins and ends in the same time, and moment in the protagonist's life, and this is not accidental in the slightest. The metro is related to, but goes beyond, modernity and its ties to coloniality. While I am acknowledging Mignolo's idea that "coloniality […] is

constitutive of modernity" (*The Darker Side of Modernity* 3), I am more interested with how the metro represents coloniality, European modernity, as well as a space for burial. The metro takes the place of colonialism as being both the end of history as well as being the precursor to the advent of civilization. Colonialism has for so long been a Eurocentric code for arriving ("próxima estación" is the exact phrase used on a Madrid subway) on the international scene: Ndongo's text, by making the Metro the semiotic center, makes the case for exiting coloniality, and a politically gendered coloniality at that. By gendered coloniality, I am perhaps beginning to brush up against María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo's idea of "colonial gendering" (*The Revolutionary Imagination* 35), but only to the extent that what I see in Ndongo's work is a sort of competition of masculinities. That is, throughout *El metro*, different characters express their relationship to coloniality in a manner that strengthens their masculinity and hence to the idea that they are equals to their former master's because of their supposed manliness. But burial comes and disrupts this narrative of a war of masculinities, presenting a third modernity based on active female participation and witchcraft (or *djembe*).

The idea of competing masculinities that I am working with comes from two studies that have critically examined the role and dynamics of social constructs such as gender in order to understand Ndongo's novel in a much deeper manner. In her article "De victorias o derrotas" (2010), Beatriz Celaya points out that "la identidad Africana que esforzadamente y con dolor construye el protagonista enfrentado a los efectos del colonialismo y el neocolonialismo, del racismo blanco y occidental, se plantea en términos de competencia masculina, en la que sólo cabe la victoria" (143). Following

suit, Chad Montuori's Butlerian analysis (2011) observes that Ndongo's novel "brings alternative images of masculinity and femininity to the surface and understands gender in ambivalent, unstable, subjective, and pluralistic terms" (46).

The supposed center of departure and arrival, of becoming and of defining derivatives, is cleverly taken from being just a *space* (the Madrid underground subway station) to being a narrative. The novel, by setting up Obama Ondo's *travesía* as being the center, destabilizes European geopolitical spaces as desirable destinations, instead focusing on the *devenir* (socialization and becoming) of the African/Cameroonian migrant protagonist. By this reading, it appears that Ndongo's text is gently insinuating that Spain's real hope for modernization is not in spite of its non-European migrants, but because of them. Even as the structure of the novel revolves around a beginning and an ending that are located in the subway station, the novel's emphasis on *histoire* subverts the idea that time and space can be put on a pedestal. By both acquiescing to making the subway the center while simultaneously taking away its capacity of fully being the center of the text's narrative, Ndongo makes it possible to see modernity as a non-commodity, and instead as a concept that is constantly being redefined, hence the clever appropriation of a European literary trope known as *bildungsroman* (the protagonist's coming-of-age story as he grows up in, and moves from, Mbalmayo, Cameroon to Madrid, Spain). For Ndongo, both modernity and gender identities are mutable and open to constant change. In this aspect, it could be said that Ndongo's novel is reworking the idea that modernity can be defined by certain spaces in time (19^{th}-20^{th} century Europe and other "developed" Western loci such as the United States or Australia, to name just a few), and instead is

focusing on the understanding that modernity can be a process, a journey, a personal road of discovery – or *bildungsroman*.

In terms of a Canclinian entrance and exit from modernity, one could read the death of "la siempre llorada" Dorothée Oyana as a catalyst for Obama Ondo's entrance into a modern masculinity that improves upon, and is critical of, the patriarchal attitudes of the preceding generations. Obama Ondo's charismatic father, who to the grandfather's chagrin has converted to and embraced the white man's Christianity, is at first loving with his beautiful and demure wife. At one point the narrator describes her as being "acostumbrada a ser una esposa sumisa y obediente" and as remembering never to "transgredir el principal deber de una buena esposa" which is, in a patriarchal interpretation of the Bible, "la obediencia ciega a su marido" (46). It is during her burial that Obama Ondo remembers something that has a great significance for his future performance of a new masculinity, one that is not entrenched in the rigidity of dogmatic forms of his grandfather or father:

> Obama Ondo percibió con claridad la abrumadora carga que se le venía encima como adelantado de una cuadrilla de mocosillos que sólo sabían exigir comida, protección y cuidados. Su madre se lo dijo dentro de su corazón: no podia contar con su padre, que desde los albores de su matrimonio había descargado la conducción de la familia sobre una esposa servicial y fiel, para dedicarse con todas las fuerzas a extender el santo teor del Dios de los blancos. Ante el cadáver de Dorothée Oyana, Obama Ondo comprendió que su

padre no era ni sería ya nunca un hombre práctico en el que los

hijos encontrasen sostén y amparo. (68)

It is at the burial ceremony of his very mother that Obama Ondo promises himself to become a "man," in the sense that he will be the "sostén y amparo" for his younger brothers and sisters. On the one hand, this is definitely an embrace of an old idea of masculinity, in which the man becomes The Source, what in the West we call "The Breadwinner," but the fact that Obama Ondo is taking over much of Dorothée Oyana's role suggests that he sees "sostén y amparo" as being much more than just bringing food to the table: it also means emotional support, taking care of ill siblings, and looking after the house in general. For Guy Ondo Ebang (the evangelical Christian father who is now a widow), being a "man" meant being an egotistical priest who enjoyed his standing in the town, and in providing a house and an income for his family. The prime difference between Obama Ondo and his father is that the former understands the idea of looking after the family as quite a bit more involved and dynamic.

Obama Ondo's ultimate decision to become the head guardian of the family comes as he and the others see the inanimate remains of his mother. His mother's burial serves as an inspiration for him to move on into the public world, perhaps reinforcing Pierre Bourdieu's ideas in his study on gender in *Masculine Domination* (2001): that women represent the imaginary side of life, and when men are ready to break away from the mother, they properly become a part of the symbolic life, the public life that is the so-called teleological destiny of men. I concede that what happens at this point in the novel is similar to Bourdieu's understanding of the traditional division of male and female

spheres, but the difference is that Obama Ondo actually wants to mix the public prestige of his father's legacy with the domestic know-how and emotional perceptiveness of his loving mother. His first migration in the novel will actually therefore not be physical, but psychological: he will cross the border that lies between boyhood and manhood when his mother dies. This painful separation will catalyze the protagonist's personal decision to work to improve the situation of his family in a secular and economic manner: "Y lo juró con firmeza y en silencio ante los restos inanimados de su madre […] él haría lo imposible para restaurar el orden antiguo y devolverle a la tribu su esplendor" (69). His entrance into modernity is thus consummated with the promise to become a better man than his father, who after Dorothée Oyana's death, falls into a lethargy of inaction and is even more unreliable as a father figure than before.

I argue that this is Obama Ondo's first real entrance into modernity, a particular version where men respect women and can take on the dynamic responsibilities of life instead of getting caught up in one exclusive activity or responsibility, such as Guy Ondo Ebang becoming obsessed with solely his job or profession as a priest, and therefore of his responsibilities (as well as image) to those in the town, and not to the family. This new conceptualization of manhood is key because it emphasizes something that European modernity does not: the importance of having the capacity and the willingness to think of others before yourself, and not just about getting ahead of others. Throughout the text, Obama Ondo's goal is never to live a glamourous life just for himself. When he does set out on his physical emigration towards the North, he does commit petty mistakes and get himself in trouble for thoughtless actions, but he never allows his egotism to rule him and

to carry him away from his original goals, which are to make enough money to come back to Mbalmayo and to take care of his family members there. Throughout the novel, Obama Ondo never forgets to remember his family. With his mother's death and subsequent burial, he exits the child-like nonage he had been under while he foolishly waited for his father to take more action with regards to the family.

Keeping in mind that Dorothée Oyana's burial is the signifier marking Obama Ondo's first internal migration, shifting from the mentality of being a needy child to being a dependable (and caring) adult, her interment can be seen as a unique move to shake up the signified meaning of burial, which is usually associated with place and as such, is a noun. As a catalyst, however, burial can be re-imagined as being a vessel for transformation, and as a semiotic form of doing away with the past, here in regards to a myopic patriarchal way of thinking, so that one can move in a more fluid world, where gender roles are no longer so fixed and controlled by a heteronormative discourse. Burial becomes a strategy for exiting old and anachronistic ways of thinking about traditional gender spaces, and also a strategy for entering new and dynamic ways of re-thinking one's gender role(s) in a changing society and world context.

In an exciting article on migration entitled "Engendering Migration Studies," Patricia Pessar asserts that among international migrants "many men seek to return home rapidly to regain the status and privileges that migration itself has challenged" (29). It seems strongly beneficial that Obama Ondo is open to, and willing, to embrace a "woman's role" in order to further the status of his family in his community even before leaving Cameroon. His openness and flexibility with regards to what gender belongs

where will help him accept the different circumstances later on in the novel when he begins his travels north, and would perhaps be indicative of his capacity to process and accept new experiences in new lands. It could be said that his mother's death is indeed the event that started the chain of events that would later lead to the protagonist separating himself from Mother Africa.

The matrix of imperial control and colonial order is thus de-emphasized, and the destination no longer matters, so long as one finds new clues on the road, be it by car, train, bus, plane, subway or *patera.* In other words, *El metro* is concerned more with the journey than with the destination, the becoming than with the arrival, and the *bildungsroman* than in the final finished personhood. In parts of the novel, Obama Ondo is in awe of the metro, and even seems to fetishize it to a certain degree, as if it were some sort of Canclinian museum: "Nunca lo olvidaría. Cuando descendió por primera vez hacia el Metro, Lambert Obama Ondo sintió un estremecimiento sorprendente, un asombroso revoltijo de estupor, pasmo y fascinación. Estaba turbado, desconcertado ante ingenio tan deslumbrante (375)." The space is also at once African and European. As far as Obama Ondo is concerned, it is the home of the subway train, which has the foreignness, speed, and efficiency of the countries *del Norte*, but also a strange familiarity:

> Pero su sorpresa fue mayor cuando bajaron por primera vez las escaleras del Metro y descubrieron una nueva ciudad bajo el suelo. Se quedó atónito: era como recorrer las inmensas madrigueras horadadas por bandadas de gigantescos grombifs en las entrañas

mismas de la tierra, y encontrarse con otro insólito mundo

luminoso en el que vivían seres humanos. (376)

The melange of both Europeanness and Africanness brings to mind the dual-minded conceptualization that Canclini had of modernity, a space where "the traditional and the modern are mixed" (2). I am perhaps parting from a Eurocentric conception that Europe is the space of modernity, and even contradicting myself: but I appreciate this about Canclini, as well. Modernity is not exactly just any one thing. By its nature it is a mix, and there are indeed some spaces where one finds more of a social heterogeneity than in other spots. Canclini understands modernity as a beautiful mess, as a sort of expression of overlapping ideologies, cultures, and identities. They are hybrid, due to the overlapping. Canclini's biggest error was to assume that Mexico was a complex overlapping of solely two cultures, the White Catholic European Spaniard, and the Native American indigenous societies such as the Quechua and the Náhuatl that had established such great civilizations even before the arrival of Cortés and Pizarro. But because Ndongo's novel is about a journey from Africa to Spain, it makes sense to discuss a certain dichotomy and the implosion of exclusive categories. As Montuori puts it, "Migration becomes an act of defiance against the normative codes of what it means to be a man, an opportunity to carve out a new construction of masculinity that breaks from the past" (49). I would add, to emphasize the historical context of his traversal, that Obama Ondo is breaking specifically with the coloniality of the past. His actions are in this regard a subtle act of decolonization, a project which is not separate from gender roles and breaking from their long-fossilized traditional conception.

Canclini gives us a base for understanding the two dominant forces at work in African colonial societies. Specifically for the purposes of this chapter, what are at stake are two competing masculinities, the African and the European, that are constantly trying to prove their prowess as politically independent entities or nation-states. The central matrix that dominates this idea that masculinities are what afford viable nation-state status is a notion that came from the colonizers. Anne McClintock, in *Imperial Leather* (1995), has referred to this matrix as "the prestige of history proper," where she states that "colonialism is the determining marker of history" (11). This central, over-arching idea centralizes coloniality and its practices and likeness as the goals of all local cultures the world over. Wole Soyinka (1976) would refer to this privileged history as "a universal-humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of *their* world and *their* history, *their* social neuroses and *their* value systems" ("Preface" x). It is this conceptualization that foments the cultivation of a masculine identity to make war with other peoples from other geographic regions. In the case of Ndongo's novel, the narrative voice reveals the Madrid subway station to be a place that hypnotizes its subjects, and casts a spell that is similar to those cast by those who practice witchcraft.

For Obama Ondo, the subway in Spain's capital is magical. It is a special place because it is so different from anything he had ever seen before. But as the protaogonist is about to learn, being different is not synonymous with being any better. Ndongo's text is in part about pointing out the unnecessary mystification of Europe as being a magical solution to all one's problems. This even becomes manifest in Obama Ondo's reflections,

when he becomes critically observant of the situation of Europe compared to Africa. The narration describes him as thinking to himself that "[t]odos confiaban en que en Europa encontrarían el remedio de todos los males, la seguridad y la felicidad" (325). Later on he will come to a darker observation, concluding that, "No había emigrado para siempre, y no llamaría a los suyos para vivir de espejismos en aquella sociedad prosaica, insana, artificial. Ahora sabía que no existe el Edén" (447). The imagery of the Garden of Eden, I posit, is partially why Africa finds itself in distress today.

The whole continent, yes, the entire space that is Africa has internalized the idea that there is an Eden out there. The phrase "out there" is not mistaken: external to Africa in both space and time, the model for development for colonized mentalities and subjectivities is either another far-removed time (pre-colonial Africa) or a whole other locus (U.S. or Europe). In this sense, the Metro as a space is everywhere. The stop where the neo-Nazis follow Obama Ondo into the train car, or *vagón*, is all over the planet even as it is not. Everwhere one goes, one will find people who look outside themselves, outside of their culture, and outside of their locality for *the* model to emulate. Canclini observes the influence of Weberian thinking in constructing a Eurocentric idea of modernity:

> […] modernity continues to have necessary connections-in the way Max Weber thought about it-with the disenchantment of the world, with the experimental sciences and, above all, with a rationalist organization of society that culminates in efficient productive enterprises and well-organized state apparatuses. (8)

Specifically, "undeveloped" countries, third-world nations such as those located in Latin America and Africa, look to an external model informed by the Puritan-capitalist ethics of Weber, located in England, in order to sort out their problems, their poverty, and their corruption.

3.2 Oppressive *Djambe*

The next scene of burial that I would like to discuss in this context of modernity/coloniality is one in which one can observe a palpable emulation, even a mimickry, of the former colonial masters who used to be in charge of what is today Cameroon. The emulation of externality in terms of space and time so as to appear more European and therefore more civilized is revealed quite graphically. The entire development of the burial, from the shooting, the decision to bury, the burial, and the unburial, are fascinating. In many aspects, what takes place regarding this first interment is reminiscent of the marvelous realism that one might find in García Márquez' *Cien años de soledad* (1967), or even Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949). The entire debacle commences as a man walks into a forest on the outskirts of Mbalmayo, Cameroon and shoots a deer, which itself later turns into the cadaver of a man. The narrator describes the conflict from the main protagonist's own recollection:

> Atemorizado, Obama Ondo recordaba casos extraños,
> inexplicables, como el protagonizado bien involuntariamente por
> Fabien Elibyo, un buen hombre de su pueblo que una noche
> desgraciada se adentró en el bosque para cazar, y disparó contra un

> venado. Pero al caer fulminado, el venado fue adquiriendo la fisonomía de Ferdinand Nguema Etoo, un canalla redomado y muy perverso que vivía en una aldea próxima. (182)

The death, and the following events, describe the difficulty of escaping the colonial mentality that many African natives have internalized. The fact that the victim, Ferdinand Nguema Etoo, had turned into a dear may seem magical, but indeed is probably more marvelous than anything else, given that much of Africa in the decolonial period that came after World War II (Cameroon became independent in 1960) had taken on a militant anti-colonial attitude that embraced what Max Liniger-Goumaz refers to as "Afro fascism" (*Africans in Europe* 25). Michael Ugarte gives a vivid description of what this brand of politics looked like in practice in Cameroon's neighboring nations, such as Ndongo's native Equatorial Guinea:

> Almost as if he were imitating the early patterns of the Franco regime, by 1972 Macías had taken complete control of the government, outlawed all political parties except one, and assumed the title of president for life, imitating, and in many ways going beyond the Generalísimo in his obsession with power […] The Macías dictatorship […] produced a collective exile, sweeping in reach, for it applied to all groups […] the Fang of Río Muni, the Bubi, the Ndowe, the Kriós, the Spaniards fearing reprisals intent on recovering their losses […] (25)

Ndongo himself has identified this performance of anti-colonialism, partially rooted in truth and partially in the false hope that one could return to pure African origins. In his *Los poderes de la tempestad* (1997), the protagonist encounters a local attitude at the Malabo airport and is vituperated for his Western dress.[50] José Urbano Martínez Carreras adds some extra details regarding Spanish-Guinean relations in the years immediately following Macías' rise to power:

> […] a lo largo de los años setenta, la situación de Guinea Ecuatorial se fue degradando en todos los aspectos así como las relaciones con España que se fueron deteriorando, y especialmente a finales de 1975 estas relaciones llegaron a su momento más crítico cuando fueron expulsados los embajadores de ambos países de sus sedes respectivas de Madrid y Malabo, con motivo de incidentes diplomáticos. (*España en Guinea* 221)

This anti-European attitude, combined with a resurgence of *la negritud* in the wake of the second World War, affected many parts of Africa. The embarrassing aspect regarding the death of Nguema Etoo is that the transformation into a deer and its metaphorical representation of a return-to-Africa scenario was cut short by a gun, itself a tool that is a symbol of colonial inheritence. The hunter, himself a local townsman, shoots the

[50] While at the Malabo airport, a female security employee rudely interpellates the protagonist and his wife, before harassing them even further: "'Esa corbata, esa camisa, esa chaqueta, esos zapatos. Son símbolos del imperialismo. Aquí estamos en plena revolución, ¿entiendes?" Even money is suspect and spit upon: Spanish *pesetas* are referred to as "el dinero de los colonialistas e imperialistas españoles. La revolución es honorable y gran camarada, jefe de Estado y del Gobierno y presidente vitalicio y constitucional de la República, su excelencia papá Mesie me Nguema Biyogo Negue Ndong ha derrotado al neocolonialismo y al imperialismo económico, y hemos sacado de la circulación a la peseta española. Ahora tenemos el ekuele." (*Los poderes de la tempestad* 24)

man/deer with one of the most efficient tools for European colonization and conquest, resulting in a death that underscores the source of much of Africa's suffering: the continent, and more specifically Cameroon, is caught in a false dichotomy that has been framed by colonialism: either chase without scruples a certain high post in the oppressive government, or become an essentialized back-to-Africa nativist, thus reinforcing negative Western stereotypes that Africa is exclusively a safari existence full of lions, monkeys and other creatures that one might see on shows similar to *National Geographic*. The anecdote about the deer and about the burial of the subject, whether as a human or as a deer, illustrates that much of Africa sees itself through the eyes of Europe, and to its own detriment. For example, the idea of being able to return to a pristine, eternal and Eden-like Africa, plays to racist Western fantasies about Africa being essentially a jungle, and of black subjects being essentially animals not far removed in the evolutionary history from gorillas and apes. Such 19th-century racial stereotypes of the types of Man are documented in McClintock's first chapter of her famous 1995 book, where she describes the racist and outdated colonial accounts where "scientists, medical men, and biologists of the day" were "marshaling the scientific 'facts' and elaborating the multifarious taxonomies of racial and sexual difference, baroque in their intricacy and flourish of detail" (49). Thus scientific racism from the 19th century lives on into 21st century colonial imaginaries inherent in colonial systems of control, domination, and psychological trapping.

But the problem does not stop just with the association of Africa with an animalistic "savage" nature: the other extreme is the obsession with procuring rank in a

hierarchy, a conceptualization of power that the Europeans introduced in their settlement of the continent's colonies. That Africa is still caught in the spell of this narrative of coloniality/modernity becomes even more evident when a potential conflict develops between two politicians who are originally from the area where Nguema Etoo was shot. The conflict between the two politicians is related to the politics of power revolving around gender. A nameless government party member and another party aspirant are having sexual relations with the same women, and so the former decides to settle the problem by digging up the corpse of Nguema Etoo's body and consuming it. The narrator describes the exhumation of the cadaver:

> […] se descubrió que el hoyito solitario al que arrojaron el enjuto cuerpecito de Nguema Etoo había sido profanado por algún o algunos desaprensivos. En efecto, el cadáver de Nguema Etoo apareció exhumado, pero sin cabeza, ni genitales ni manos, que los delincuentes se llevaron nadie sabe bien para qué, aunque no faltó quien propalara la especie de que tales órganos fueron los elementos principales de una ceremonia destinada a confirmar en su cargo al diputado distrital del partido único […] (184)

Obsessed with not losing his power, the party member feeds upon the once-buried cadaver. By consuming the other, one finds that the cannibal and the consumed victim are not separate, but actually bound, actually, by a colonialization of the mind that has brainwashed them into thinking that there are only two options to improve the quality of life in Africa: either run for the highest political office one can get, or revert to animalism

and rejoice in the life as Africans did before the dawn of colonialism: both ideas are highly unrealistic, and glaringly at odds with contemporary Africa and its sociopolitical facts on the ground. The narrator later ties together this hunger for raw political power and its connection to witchcraft, or *djambe*, in a part of the novel where Cameroon's economy collapses, and the general population of the country finds itself in dire straits.

The competition for power in the sub-Saharan region is intense: the practices of grave-robbing and of mutilating corpses in order to exhibit one's power can be quite common in many areas. Speaking about Central and Western Africa, Ndongo himself weighs in on what the West and its journalists call "elections" in Africa, discussing the bodies that are often found, mutilated and around towns, before the locals even begin voting for their candidates:

> En las visperas de lo que ellos llaman elecciones en Africa, aparecen muchos cadaveres y tal en esas condiciones, con las manos cortadas, o el corazón o el sexo, en fin las mujeres sin los pechos, sin lengua, sin ojos, cosas de ese tipo [..] son gente que va matando porque se supone que matan para tener poder y ganar las elecciones y reforzar su poder, ese es el mensaje. (Interview 16 July 2013)

But herein lies the exact problematics that face not only Cameroon, but many postcolonial nations today: two men settle their conflicts by setting the terms for women's sexuality. The woman's body becomes a bargaining chip in political negotiations in a game that is played by men, but where women suffer the collateral

damage. This is basically a visual comment of the state of affairs where first-world countries decide they want to "liberate" the women, and then making war on the state. Nationalism comes under fire, and then militarizes the bodies of women against outside enemies. As Leela Gandhi writes, "the nation authenticates its distinct cultural identity through its women" (96). Thus the female body becomes the commodified armor through which a nation achieves its true aims at decolonization, and the female corporeality suffers the collateral damage. It is against the collateralization of female corporeality that Ndongo's text articulates itself, positioning itself effectively, and surprisingly, against patriarchy in Western Sub-Saharan African nations. It is also worth mentioning McClintock's words that state: "Controlling women's sexuality, exalting maternity and breeding a virile race of empire-builders was widely perceived as the paramount means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body" (qtd. in *Postcolonial Theory* 98). In this scene, the exhumation of the buried body represents a form of fortifying the state of the regime currently in power.

The grotesqueness of this episode draws us back, perhaps in abject fashion, to a rather evocative definition of *djambe* that we have already touched upon earlier. Recall that Geschiere defines *djambe* as being "a small being that lives inside the belly of its possessor." Eating another gives one certain powers, and in this case resolves the conflict between two politicians. As one can see, a woman is involved in the conflict, but the nature of the issue of itself is dangerous because of how opposing men perceive each other's masculinities. Masculinity is equated with power, and the two politicians decide to share power by sharing the woman's body. She is an instrument to their exercise of

power, but she herself has no agency: at least as far as the men are concerned, she is of no consequence. Both the township of Mbalmayo, as well as the neighboring town (home of the shot victim who the party member cannibalizes), care little for the woman so long as no over-arching political matter comes to harm their local status quo. But for all their lack of troubles, the fact remains that the towns themselves, relatively undisturbed, are still subject to the powers that be, a haunting fact that is subtly betrayed in a paragraph that describes a town's relative sense of relief that the two politicians reached a resolution:

> Visto lo cual, el pueblo, siempre sumiso y crédulo, pasó a rendir honores a la memoria del otrora maligno Ferdinand Nguema Etoo, quien, al decir de sus coetáneos, no debió ser tan malicioso como se creía –o en todo caso había sido redimido de sus pasadas fechorias por los espíritus de los idos- si al final sus restos habían servido para aplacar la ira de los poderosos y evitar males mayores a los resignados aldeanos. Y así permanence su recuerdo en Mbalmayo. (185-186)

The degree to which political power is displayed in order to keep an entire town in line and subservient to the established tyrannical order is entirely dependent upon how much the politicians and their allies can scare the locals. Ndongo explains: "Esa es la metáfora: la paz y la tranquilidad que hay en Africa, la estabilidad, está basada en millones de muertos, en montones de cadáveres, y se desentierran todavía" (Personal Interview 16 July 2013). By keeping the population apprehensive about death and grave-robbing, the ruling classes are able to rule with impunity. The idea of democracy is simply a rhetorical

device used to give the West an out and an excuse to not intervene in what might be compartmentalized and framed as an "African problem" (as opposed to a "humanitarian crisis").

The degree to which *djambe* becomes effective in this scene has much to do with how Africa sees itself as well as how it wishes to be seen by Europe. There is a central challenge for the independent countries of Africa that has been with them during the entire post World War II period and that has not abated to the present: to the outside world, Africa wants to be seen as modern and also as masculine by European standards, at masculine enough so that Cameroon and its political class will be seen as being virile enough to govern their own country. There is a paradoxical dynamic of making Cameroon look convincingly modern and sovereign to the rest of the world while at the same time suppressing all the political unrest that proves plenty to the contrary. The deployment of Africa-as-nature plays to this end, as Africa is indeed savage with its own people, and strangely subservient still to Europe, which it considers to be its superior. From a metaphorical point of view, Africa cleans up its house so that foreign visitors only see one aspect of Africa, but when one enters the country and sees what really is going on, one sees that Africa (or at least much of it, at any rate) is stuck in a sort of mental poverty that is the result of centuries of colonization.

The dual reality of modernity-meets-oppression-against-domestic-dissidents is perhaps yet another reason why *El metro* is an apt title for the Ndongo's text. Just as with Cameroon and its external image, there is a insider/outsider relationship, and one can choose to enter or to exit. In fact, the metro illustrates the negatives that unite both Spain

and Cameroon: they are both trapped in a mentality in which their subconscious sticks to outdated understandings of modernity. Put in another way, both Spaniards and Cameroonians, in great measure, are stuck to an understanding of modernity in which they have internalized a self-image that is inaccurate, racist, patriarchal, and dangerously exclusive. To the elitism of the Cameroonian political classes there is the ongoing allegiance to extreme right-wing Francoism in Spain, with its racialized *nacionalcatolicismo*, a sickening ideology that drives neo-Nazis such as the ones in the *metro* to believe in a Spain where the white descendents of Visigoths are naturally superior to anybody from Africa, including the Moors.

In this sense, the Metro is the dark underground, the under-the-surface subconscious that is latent and lies dormant in the Spanish consciousness, a place where neo-Nazis, ashamed to admit to African blood in their families, work to eliminate any evidence of blackness, so that rich visitors from other European countries see Spain as just another proper white member of a supposedly white Europe. Here too, the problem is how Spain sees itself, just as in how Africa sees itself. Both are concerned with keeping up their appearances before an audience, and in this case, of being specifically European. Ndongo's subway station as he pens it is a space where people go to find their feared selves, or where one can go to find the identity that they wish to hide, as if closeted, from the rest of the world. This is why Obama Ondo concludes, as earlier quoted, that Spain is "superficial." He sees it as a geopolitical entity that is overly preoccupied with what the world will see, all the while afraid of what it really is (diverse, black, white, brown, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Atheist, Agnostic). Anxious to present only a single

façade to the visitors on the streets, Spain keeps its blackness below the surface, in its *paradas de metro.* Here one might observe a curious crossing of Canclini's definition of hybrid modernities in cityscapes such as the metro and McClintock's idea of challenging "The White Family of Man" in her *Imperial Leather* (232), specifically by enabling a reading of the subway space as being a unique potentiate for breaking with family genealogies and untrue myths about Spanish origins. The subway station has multiple entrances and exits, and heads in all different directions, hence challenging the idea of a universality controlled by one single white Eurocentric narrative.

In the meantime, it is important to recognize that in Africa, what the towns such as Mbalmayo and their surrounding neighbors fear is a crackdown by the centralized government, with orders from the President, otherwise referred to in the novel as "el Dedo Portentoso" (250). The death of Nguema Etoo, his burial, and the subsequent cannabilization of his body by a powerful and distant politician from the ruling party, reveals the way in which postcolonial Africa in many ways is actually neocolonial, continuing the legacy of European colonial practices, even, as Bhabha would say, "mimicking" the former colonizers, assuring that power could not be decentralized and fragmented. Bhabha writes: "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same" (122).[51] By consuming

[51] In his darkly comic essay *Cómo ser negro y no morir en Aravaca* (1994), Francisco Zamora writes about the leaders' perspectives (particularly about Francisco Macías Nguema) on how to lead their formerly colonized country: "El lunático que en menos de diez años dejaría la vieja Guinea Española como una necropolis, no renegaba del colonialismo. No. Lo defendía a capa y espada. 'Tampoco la política colonial la puedo atacar tanto, porque para mandar a un hombre se necesita poner mano dura, porque de lo contrario tampoco hubiésemos recibido la civilización. Pero es que el colonialismo también lo divide, porque algún día, ahora que los hombres aspiran a ir a la Luna, quién sabe si la Guinea será la que va a colonizar a los de la Luna"' (69).

Nguema Etoo's body, the cadaver becomes a synecdoque of power, in the form of a bodily text being assimilated to a dominant and vertically-oriented power structure. Under this structure, all subjectivities seek the paths that seek to the one True destination. Yet there is no One True Destination, and the imagery of a hybrid modernity such as the subway, with its variegating places of entrance and exit, serves to derail this popular myth in both Francoism and in neocoloniality. Thus while in an Africa enslaved to colonial ideologies that force one to fight one's way up through a hierarchy, the parliament member must seek to demonstrate the ability to ingest another. This idea of eating the weaker man plays, problematically, to two expectations: (1) the West's obsession with African savagery in the form of cannabalism, and (2) the drive to gain hierarchical prestige. The cannabalization becomes a proper performance that at once pleases the West in its racist suspicion that Africa is the land of barbarism and of cannibals; the race to the top demonstrates the degree of successful implantation of a competitive, market-oriented, European ideology in the minds of postcolonial African subjects eager, perhaps only subconsciously, to assimilate. The performativity satisfies the European need for otherness: the obsession for power satisfies the European need for its subjects to assimilate. The African *évolué,* or educated and Europeanized subject, becomes a puppet to the simultaneous European demand for African dependency and the European desperation to separate itself from a supposedly inferior African savagery.

In his scholarly examination of Cameroonian culture, Geschiere describes the *évolués* as African elites who are often apologetic to Europe and out of touch with the so-called "common people." They are people who lead pampered and sheltered lives, always

protected from the smells, experiences, and privations with which most people on the street in Cameroon are familiar. Describing the *évolués* as the "educated elite," Geschiere explains that

> Toward the end of the 1950s, some young Maka [people from a rural region in Cameroon] who had received diplomas took advantage of decolonization and the Africanization of the state bureaucracy in an expected manner. Several of them made brilliant careers, being carried by the flu of vacant posts. (36)

But there is an issue that the *évolués* face in modern-day Africa. They often leave their local hometowns and leave for the bigger cities in order to take part in centralized governance, and in their ambition they lose touch with the people from their hometowns. Geschiere writes:

> This aversion to village life has deeper reasons than mere physical discomfort. Certain *Grands* [political elite who left the village to serve in the government] admitted to me that they were afraid of the village. Several used the same phrase: "You have to keep your distance because, otherwise, you risk being *eaten* by the villagers." […] This fear of being "eaten" could mean that the elites fear being plundered by the villagers and their constant demands. (108)

Obviously part of the reason the politician cannibalized Nguema Etoo, the man who was shot in the forest, was to hold on to whatever power others perceived him as having. His representation of a nasty and power-obsessed, male-dominated regime, along with his

obsession with advancing vertically through its hierarchy, describes the narrow confines of success and relative comfort available for Cameroonians in a country where a great many citizens live at or below the poverty level.[52] Thus, when the nation's economy falls apart, the corrupt political sorcery of the powerful is revealed. The very same sorcery that saved the town of Mbalmayo from any crackdown by the central government, is the sorcery that keeps some in power and keeps others in permanent poverty.

The tie that binds elite politicians and évolués to their hometowns is very similar to the tie that exists in the United States, and likely a great many other countries in the West that are skeptical when it comes to the idea and practice of witchcraft. Geschiere writes in regards to *djambe* that "Witchcraft offers hidden means to grab power, but at the same time it reflects sharp feelings of impotence; it serves especially to hide the sources of power" (9). One could certainly think of instances in which political advisers, hidden from the public, evaluate polls and consider strategies so as to make a politician more successful during the elections. No one sees the advisor, but the effects of her/ his plans are what makes the visible candidate successful. In other words, often there is no proof of witchcraft and of the so-called "magic" with which it is often associated, an honest concern in the West with its history of scientific positivism. But there is often in many cases an outcome that is indeed tangible.[53] *Djambe* is also similar: its outcome is

[52] According to the World Bank website http://data.worldbank.org/country/cameroon, in 2007, the year *El metro* was published, 39.9% of the population lived in poverty.

[53] One could consider the example, in American politics, of the advisors who calculated that more Americans would identify with Reagan if he had jellybeans on his desk. There are many other examples, including Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign announcement commercial, calculated to so as to make sure audiences would not see her as self-centered and preoccupied with winning the elections. A brilliant film that illustrates possible parallels with the aims and outcomes of witchcraft would be John Frankenheimer's 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate,* or perhaps even the trickery behind the idea of "Ol' Shoe Joe" in

calculated, and its purpose is to bring about a certain result. One could compare it to the Wizard of Oz, where the man behind the curtains is able to create a false illusion in order to make himself feel more powerful. This idea of wizardry manipulating the outcome of important events is another way of understanding the relevance of *djambe* to the so-called "modern" countries. Geschiere makes the observation that

> [w]hen I listened to my friends' speculations about the hidden role of the *nganga* (healers) and their arsenal of occult tools, which supposedly were decisive factors in regional and even national politics, I was often struck by the parallel with the role attributed to public relations experts in American politics (and increasingly in Europe as well). Like the *nganga*, these experts are supposed to "armor" (*blinder*) the politicians. Their ability to bring success stems from their esoteric, and more or less magical, knowledge. (9)

It is also at this time that a third option begins to reveal itself, one that could help modernize Africa, but in localized terms, not in terms of the World Bank, or the IMF, or in the form of money from the EU. For in reaction to the massive inflation and the loss of jobs, women in Douala, Cameroon's capital, will begin to assume the economic leadership of the houses, effectively becoming the "breadwinners," displacing the traditional role that males have in many African households. What is crucial to understand here is how female agency is responding in a coordinated manner to the corruption of a male-headed country. The narrator describes the situation in terms of

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Wag The Dog (1997). In all instances, a certain outcome was sought after, and achieved. The people behind the scenes had worked their "magic."

djambe, as bodies begin to appear in rivers and in other areas, without their brains, and without their entrails:

> Aparecían por las orilllas de los ríos, o flotando sobre las aguas o en cualquier recodo, cadavers emasculados y cescerebrados, a los que se había despojado también de alguna viscera, sobre todo del corazón; y, amedrentado, el pueblo se perdía en mil conjeturas sobre ceremonias de brujos organizadas o por los poderosos que no querían perder su poder, o por los miserables deseosos de escapar de su miseria. (253)

Thus the witches, or "brujos" that arrived during the Conquest of Africa have ceded their power to the postcolonial "brujos," the politicians who only care about their political trajectory within the party as individuals, and not about the community. This patriarchal economy, and the fear that it inspires in the people, inspires another sort of practice of sorcery, one that emanates from the women of the community.

3.3 Toward Liberation: The *Djambe* of Resistance

The important economic role that the women assume in this period of crisis can be thought of in terms of *djambe* because it has all the same raw elements and aspects of witchcraft as does the politicians' ritual cannabilization of the people and their cadavers. Namely, it is a secret, and incognito process that produces results. Nobody asks the questions (the men are afraid to know the reason), and somehow, money appears on the table, as does fruit, bread, and other edibles. Entire families are able to survive thanks to

these women who keep the country moving, if only at a basic and rudimentary level. Were these women to be members of government, they would probably be that much more empowered to improve the socioeconomic and political system. The other reason this appears to qualify as an act of witchcraft is because (1) it restores a sort of harmony or balance to the community, and because (2) it is rooted in kinship and household relationships. Here is a look at how the women's practice of taking the "breadwinner" reigns of the family changes the family and kinship dynamics:

> Y surgieron y crecieron asociaciones de *tontine* o *djangué*, en las que cada socia aportaba una cuota fija a un fondo común, del cual disfrutaba de forma rotatoria cada asociada, que así podía iniciar un pequeño negocio o hacer frente a necesidades apremiantes. […] las mujeres pasaron a generar una parte importante de la actividad económica que sostenía los hogares e impedía el hundimiento del país. […] Así se produjo una de las revoluciones silenciosas más determinantes de la reciente historia del continente […] a los hombres se les bajaron los humos […] y se limitaban a sentarse a la mesa en un silencio reconcentrado y espeso. (256-257)

The questionable source of the financial capital remains, for the most part, a mystery. But the effects of a consistent income re-establishes a basic harmony in the household. Interestingly, it is a harmony that shakes up the government, which finds that it cannot control the women (257). For this reason alone the women's willingness to stand up in their family makes their movement a subversive one that truly challenges both coloniality

and patriarchy in their country. One problematic here is that, if there is a sort of "silent revolution" in which women become respected breadwinners, it is only for a limited time and *only* due to a political-economic crisis. In otherwords, there is the possibility that the women here are only valued for economic contributions in moments of extreme economic desperation, and not inherently as people, a central tenet in any expression of feminism. Nevertheless, the role of women here becomes considerable, and it is quite realistic to portray the men as sitting at the table in a sort of serious and silent fashion: after so much time in power, they have to finally confront the fact that perhaps their supposed superiority is not natural, and that they, too, are vulnerable beings.

It is also important to understand that destabilizing factors are not always themselves explicitly revolutionary in nature, and that *djambe*, while it has subversive potential when enacted towards the leaders of a country, is often times subtle and located at the margins of the margins. Geschiere observes the following, referring to a French political scientist before him:

> In his earlier writing on Cameroon, and on the state in Africa more generally, Jean-Francois Bayart has underscored the importance of "popular modes of political action," which subvert and limit state authoritarianism. […] In spite of pressure from above, popular modes of action do influence political developments. Often, they are not easily discernible; they are deployed on the margins of formal politics, in zones where they are not readily detected by the new rulers. (99)

However, the message is clear: the lower classes and those who are typically outside of the establishment's considerations are exercising what limited power they have to effect widespread change at the community level. Subverting patriarchy and its designs, the woman take the local economy and shape it in such a way that their families come first, and not the Central Party's main interests, which are often quite removed from the peoples'. It is also important to add that, even if this movement is brief and even if it were not to immediately succeed, it could serve to stoke the flames and thus inspire other revolutionary subjectivities, and thus no matter what, the women's associations serve as a sort of springboard for future social and political involvement that challenges rigid state orders and expectations.

The problematics of appreciating women only when they can provide for the family contributes and reinforces a dangerous myth that is oppressive to women that have families. In *El metro*, the ruling regime has tapped into this culture of expecting women to stand by their man. It appears that the dynamics of *djambe* have been maneuvered and politicized in order to keep women from becoming *too* financially independent. This political strategy is deployed around the burial of the progressive French missionary Monsieur Dieudoné Bithegue, who appears to have tripped and fallen on a mound of rocks while walking home drunk one night. Later on, however, one finds that Monsieur Dieudoné Bithegue's death is not so simple, and one understands that there may be a much more complex scenario in which his wife, and all his descendents "fueron señalados como brujos, condenados al anatema y desterrados de por vida de los contornos de Mbalmayo" (135-136). Afraid at the potential of women who actually feel good about

having left their despondent husbands (the priest, while a progressive political activist, was also a horrible father and had turned to the bottle in order to cope with the government crackdowns), *djambe* is manuevered to fight against women who dare to be independent. In this part of the novel, Ndongo is critiquing the progressive opposition to "el Dedo Portentoso," recognizing the *machista* behavior that is circulating in the groups of clandestine activists who are supposedly seeking a better and more free Cameroon.

In an interview with Ndongo, the author has explicitly acknowledged how burial can relate to a country's politics, and the idea that death can be used as a scare tactic:

> En la concepcion animista en toda el Africa negra, la muerte
> natural no existe. Nadie muere por muerte natural. Siempre cuando
> alguien muere es porque alguien le ha matado […] se supone que
> ellos mismos le han matado. Siempre es deslucida por alguien,
> para ser quemado o para comerte, por envidia, por tal […]
> (Personal Interview 16 July 2013)

When Ndongo speaks about "ellos," or "ellos mismos," it is not clear about whom he speaks, but it is likely that he is talking about the powerful classes, those who are in the higher echelons of the regime, who construct deaths that look accidental, but that are actually deliberately orchestrated by those who have power. In the novel, the death of Monsieur Diedoné Bithegue is not thought to be an accident, and the locals begin to think of witchcraft that has been used on the missionary, because, as the local thought went:

> la ebriedad no explicaba por sí sola la caída desgraciada y el golpe que quitó la vida a Monsieur Dieudoné Bithegue, y la lógica lugareña descartó asimismo la probabilidad de que el finado pudiera haber sido atropellado por un coche dado a la fuga: nadie fallece porque haya llegado su hora; toda muerte es debida a sortilegios maléficos de una mano oculta […] (135)

During the actual burial, very few actually attend the ceremony, and end up leaving the area for about two days. The people of Mbalmayo are afraid of the evil spirits, and for them, the person responsable for his death is his wife, who perhaps is suspicious only because she is single, relatively content, and responsable.

The missionary and his wife were a divorced couple, and the narrator's description of the wife is not the most flattering. However, it appears, in a text where many women (Anne Mengue, Danielle Eboué) have to deal with being single and strong in a patriarchal milieu, that the tone of the narration is satirical of the Mbalmayo natives and their suspicions. At first the missionary's wife is described in a negative fashion, as being cold and careless:

> Alguno de los paisanos que trabajaban en Yaundé [where she had moved] comunicó el deceso a la que había sido su esposa, que ahora se dedicaba al pequeño comercio en un populoso barrio de la capital, y, sin mostrar ni un solo signo de pesar […] (133)

However, her coldness becomes much more understandable when one understands what she had to put up with in her marriage, in which the husband/father of her children

> les tenía desamparados, que no escribió ni una triste nota, ni envió presente alguno, ni dio señales de vida [...] Para ella y sus hijos y los hijos de sus hijos, remachó la nada enlutada mujer, Dieudoné Bithegue llevaba muerto muchos años y le daba igual que por fin ya se pudriese en el infierno, pues su corazón le había enterrado desde que se mostró incapaz de atender a su familia. (133)

Since no one in Africa would ever believe that someone actually died a natural death, all the blame is thrown upon the exwife, not a major surprise considering that in Cameroon, most evil occurs within the domestic frontier, at least as far as *djambe* is concerned. Geschiere points out in his study of *djambe* in Cameroon that there is a "close and persistent link between witchcraft and kinship or 'the house.' Even in modern contexts-for instance, in the big cities-witchcraft is supposed to arise, first of all, from the intimacy of the family and the home" (11). The general consensus is that *djambe* springs from an imbalance within the household, and the idea is to re-establish a sort of delicate equilibrium within one's house. In Ndongo's novel, this idea of witchcraft and its relation to the domestic sphere can be found as a cultural understanding that has been mobilized in favor of a patriarchal attitude toward women, one in which the country's problems are made to be caused by the female sex. As we will see in the following, the best way to receive the hostility of a patriarchal power complex is to be a divorced African female, as a rich woman observes later on in Ndongo's novel.

Married, but unhappy, the well-to-do Danielle Eboué never divorces precisely because of the bad treatment that women like the missionary's wife often receive: however, she does later find herself single as her husband dies of AIDS complications. Danielle Eboué's marriage to a high-ranking polítical party member, Monsieur Rémy Eboué, who the narrator describes as being "de esos incansables trabajadores al servicio de la Patria" (211-212) and that "apenas pasaba dos semanas seguidas en el país" (211), is one that over the years turns into a pragmatic union. What one sees here is yet another évolué, somewhat like the one who cannabalized the man/deer. With Madame Eboué, as with the "silent revolution" that occurred during Cameroon's economic crisis, one sees a country that is no longer looking outside of itself for help and from improvements but is beginning to look at itself inquisitively and creatively. Or at least what one sees is a woman who slowly moves to looking at herself within a more Cameroonian context, as opposed to her status with regards to Europe. But she only does this as she matures in the marriage, and as she sees her husband go from being an elegant and ideal princely figure to an overweight opportunist:

> Aquel principiante idealista, ese ser perfeccionista que deseó cambiar el país, transformar África y liberar al mundo del colonialismo y del neocolonialismo, ayudando a instaurar una era de paz, felicidad y armonía entre razas y continentes, se había convertido en un gordinflón egoísta, astuto y marrullero, oportunista y embaucador, ávido de poder y de dinero. (215)

When we meet Danielle, we see that she has quite a positive relationship with the EU. But the death of her husband will be the catalyst for a change in perspective, as she grows more critical with the state of African society. Ndongo is exceptionally good in developing the inner world of his characters, and with Danielle he makes no exception. When one first encounters the beautiful woman in the novel, her presentation, other than her physicality, is not flattering. The reader both feels sorry for her and a slight reticence to her, as we are introduced to her through Obama Ondo's eyes. Obama Ondo does not see her as a full woman, and the narrator makes this issue clear.

However, when her husband dies due to complications from AIDS, which he contracted while sleeping with non-Cameroonian women while out on one of his government excursions to other countries, there is a deep development in Danielle's character. One could say that Ndongo's novel appears to be employing a possible sort of authorial *djambe*, revealing his own political opinion on the responsibilities of high-ranking national officials and their debt to the people they supposedly represent. In this sense, *El metro* appears to be driving home a moral to its readers, that is, that bad political leaders will eventually, and inevitably pay for their inmoral behavior. This is certainly a valid reading, but I think it is interesting that his death leads to Danielle examining her own motivations for living and existing in a country where there are so many economic disparities. What is particularly engaging in this part of the text is how the narrator begins to discuss the political climate for women who grow up and go to school in Cameroon, and from an African point of view.

As she considers her deceased husband's male privilege, Danielle begins to reveal a deeper aspect of herself that could possibly reflect that her marriage to her husband was an act of agency on her part, a conscious decision not for herself, but rather for the future of her daughters, and through them, the future of Cameroon. In her description of her hopes and desires for her children, we can recognizes common ideas of hybridity found from Canclini's inquiry of modernity: "Danielle Eboué había pensado siempre que la persona ideal tenía que ser una síntesis de africano y europeo, un ser que mezclara a dosis iguales sentimiento y lógica, utilitarismo e idealismo" (218). Taking from two different cultures and bringing them together so that they overlap in different ways, Danielle conceptualizes an African identity where the historical native and the colonizer fuse identities. However, her status, even as a rich woman in Cameroon, is quite precarious. While she has plenty of money, her status comes from the person to whom she is married. This is evident when Danielle reflects on the differences in her motives to send her children to European schools, which are markedly different from her husband's:

> Para su marido, era un signo más de opulencia enviar a sus cuatro hijos a internados europeos para que estudiaran allí todos los ciclos formativos hasta doctorarse en la universidad. Para ella, sin embargo, era un seguro cara a su futuro, un aval de su libertad. (217)

Her thoughts for the future of her children continues:

> Por eso quería asegurar el futuro de sus hijos, blindarles contra la inestabilidad política y económica. Pero defenderlos también de

> los enemigos invisibles, esos brujos que matan sólo por envidia. Como es improbable que los maleficios de los negros alcancen a la gente tan lejos, era preferible que estuviesen protegidos de todo peligro en la Metrópoli a verlos muertos, como había sucedido en su propia familia. (217)

Danielle's fear reveals that she, too, is aware of *djambe* in the form of "brujos que matan sólo por envidia." Her fear reveals a cause, "envidia," that points out that there is a jealousy/ envy that comes from not having as much power as the rich such as do the Eboués. She is very aware that, on a national level, there is a great imbalance and lack of equilibrium in the metaphorical house of the nation, and that poorer subjects, desireous of change, could enact *djambe* to create the desired change.

But it is also a hope for generational change, and for a sacrifice of creating change in Africa. In order for this to happen though, Danielle seems to find a common ground with Canclini's ideas of entering/exiting modernity. For her, her children exiting Africa in order to get an education is a form of acquiring a form of (yes, European) modernity to be brought back into Cameroon in order to better the country. So re-entering Africa, perhaps the would be able to bring back change, for example, in gender perception and in ideas regarding the status of women in Cameroon. At one part, while reflecting on why she continues in her boring and dreary marriage to Rémy Eboué, she observes that she could not:

> luchar sola contra la tradición: es lo normal en esta vida miserable que las mujeres africanas se ven obligadas a soportar, pues su voz,

> si es que la tienen, no es escuchada en un mundo hecho a la medida de los hombres. Situación de la que las propias mujeres eran culpables […] Y seguía pesando lo suyo la influencia ancestral: las abuelas, las madres, las tías, suegras y cuñadas eran las principales agentes transmisoras de la sumisión. (216)

She identifies the problem that exists in her country, where women have no voice, and despite enjoying great wealth (if they are a member of the elite like Danielle is), they still experience what is in reality a second-class existence to men. Her distance from regular, everyday human subjects, the poor and the homeless who live on the streets throughout the country, seems to lead to a questionable (and moralistic) fate for her as well as for her late husband. For the conjecture goes that if her husband contracted AIDS abroad there is always the chance that she could have become a carrier herself.

Through the discourse of AIDS, it becomes evident that part of the reason people in Africa are buried is due to their own challenges, namely the politically corrupt upper classes who make great amounts of money at the expense of the many who have absolutely nothing. When at one point Obama Ondo learns that he could also contracted the virus via his relationship with Danielle, a re-reading of what "modernity" means for Africa becomes possible. Consider the following, which are Obama Ondo's reflections on the devastating virus, and its effects on generations of children, including his own:

> Lo importante era que él mismo, de rebote, podía estar contaminado. Y podría haber inoculado el virus a Sylvie [his girlfriend], y ésta, a su vez, a Bernard, su hijo. Y le asustaba esa

cadena trágica. Su irresponsabilidad podía matarle a él y a sus seres más queridos. (415)

Important here is the reversal in what "modernity" means for Africa, and in its external and internal relationship to the continent. Continental Africa has a very high rate of of HIV/AIDS contraction[54]: in a 2004 study, scientists found that 5.5% of the Cameroonian population had contracted HIV, the virus that causes the disease (Mbanya, Sama, and Tchounwou 2008). In other words, normally Africa is conceptualized as being the source of the spread of the AIDS virus. But here, there is the chance that AIDS came from outside Africa, and quite possibly from Europe. It is as if the space of the remedy could be where one also finds the poison, a sort of Derridean reading of pharmakon. The consequence of AIDS, wherever they were to originate, would be nefarious, as Obama Ondo observes. The disease could in fact affect generations of African children left vulnerable and unchecked, to its presence in their bloodstream. Now let us reconsider *djambe* and modernity in the context of AIDS that is imported via human bodies into Cameroon. If one reads this potential for infection metaphorically, one could see modernity, with its locus in Europe, as being the source of disease and of Africa's destruction. A far cry from what modernity supposedly brings, which are clean and hygenically correct ideas and concepts such as civilization, culture, and efficiency. The stereotype that AIDS is an African disease is subverted, and modernity becomes framed as a disease entering Africa. Also, the idea that Africa is a locus of tragedy is also

[54] According to a 2011 article in *The Atlantic*, Sub-Saharan Africa alone is home to 70% of all HIV infections and 67% of all AIDS-related deaths ("The Story of AIDS in Africa").

cleverly reversed here, as the rather demystifying imagery of Europe as a locus of death becomes perceptible here.

By this regard, where destruction enters Africa due to its exit from Europe, the latter is no longer seen as a safe haven. One is not safe anywhere, or at least not entirely so. This is yet another reason to agree with Obama Ondo when he concludes that Europe is not the "Eden" he supposed it would be. The very fact that the root of destruction could be centered in Europe alone would strengthen the argument against fully assimilating to European ideals of modernity. This is why, at one point, Obama Ondo critiques the assimilationist model that so many European news pundits speak about:

> A Obama Ondo le resultaba chocante por simplona la prepotencia de los graciosillos que proponían, mucho más en serio de lo que proclamaban sus sonrisillas irónicas, en debates televisivos o en conversaciones de café, que los inmigrantes debían mostrar su adaptación comiendo morcilla y chorizo, embutidos elaborados con carne de cerdo, aunque lo prohibiera su religión […] ¿ […] por qué toda la Humanidad debía parecerse a los europeos? (403)

His reasoning opens up a debate that has been going on actively and explicitly since Fernando Ortiz wrote about transculturation in his 1940 essay *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar.* Black Africans have historically been considered to be just a general mass of subjectivities to be quickly assimilated to the much superior model of the few, and rich, so-called "white" countries, such as much of Europe. The problem with the power structure that both Danielle an Obama Ondo observe is that it is upheld by an elite

male structure that excludes the women (including the rich) and the poor in general. This is why Ndongo's novel is of such key importance, because it opens up the idea of democratizing national political structures, and of pluralizing those structures, so that everyone has an equal voice, and is allowed equal access, so that all ideas are heard. When Rémy Eboué passes away, there is a general semiotics going on here in which the patriarch dies. This strike to the realm of the Lacanian symbolic gives way to the semiotic, giving room for the woman to rise to power and to be empowered to think and live as she pleases. The death of the politician always reveals the *meta* nature of the semiotic, a world where men are still subservient to coloniality because they have internalized the colonial values to such an extent that they react to current events in a certain, conditioned way. Specifically, they respond to the world around them with a colonially-conditioned response that almost makes it seem as if colonialism never left. For example, the narrative relates that Monsieur Eboué always enjoyed dominating

> una descendiente de las indomables walkirias, dejar sin aliento a una amazon de suaves cabellos dorados, ojos azules y Mirada feline, típica exponente y fiel representación de ese pueblo altanero que en otro tiempo sojuzgó a los suyos, era el placer de los placeres y una suerte de venganza histórica. Poseerla le liberaba de complejos arraigados desde la más tierna infancia, le afirmaba ante sí mismo y ante el mundo, satisfacía la sed y el hambre de siglos, resarcía los vilipendios de la esclavitud y las humillaciones del colonialismo. (212-213)

This misogynistic view of white women reinforces gender stereotypes in which men dominate women, except that here there is a racial and historico-colonial complication. Fanon, in *Black Skins, White Masks*, wrote about the motivations behind this sexual domination in the opening sentences of his third chapter:

> Out of the blackest part of my soul, through the zone of hachures,
> surges up this desire to be suddenly *white.*
>
> I want to be recognized not as *Black*, but as *White.*
>
> But-and this is the form of recognition that Hegel never described-
> who better than the white woman to bring this about? By loving
> me, she proves to me that I am worthy of a white love. I am loved
> like a white man. (45)

It is from this dichotomy of colonized mindsets- one in the form of the former colonizers, the other in the form of the present administrators, from which Danielle wishes to free herself. She notes that the attitude of native black African men is oppressive to her and most of the other women, regardless of class, in her country. Danielle notes that single women in Africa are treated as pariahs: however, her new singleness is due to natural causes. She could not help her husband's passing. Thus, while the protagonist admits that in many African countries "una divorciada […] sólo está un escalón por encima de la prostituta" (219), a fact which reveals a patriarchal culture's discriminatory attitudes towards single women, Danielle has been able to narrowly escape this stigma due to the fact that she wasn't divorced. Rather, her husband just didn't last, and it in no way can be blamed on her. This empowers Danielle to enter a new life stage, as a single person, with

respect and regard, not with shame and disgrace. Her agency upon entering into singledom could mean a new definition of modernity for African/ Cameroonian women, a prospect that makes her newfound singledom quite exciting in terms of political prestige and possibility for women. For if there were more single women with power, no longer stuck to their husband's hand-me-down allowances, political infrastructure could be edified whereby women would have more access to public speech, public expression, and public office. As such, Rémy Eboué's exit means a closer entrance for Africa into modernity in terms of potential gender equality. More equity in one house symbolically gets the entire national "house" closer to a more tolerant vision of women entering and having success in the non-domestic sphere, be it public employment, national politics, or otherwise.

One could say that with all the observation he makes of Spaniards and how they portray themselves, Obama Ondo when his on the Madrid subway is like a man in an anthropology museum, attempting to objectify a culture and observe what the host culture is like. Canclini writes extensively about museums and their relation to modernity, arriving at the conclusion that museums often reinforce the dominant national culture, justifying the teleological victory of a (white, Europeanized) status quo at the expense of (regrettably) destroyed indigenous people and their respective rituals: "[t]he simulated 'infinitude' of the museum is a metaphor of the infinitude of the national patrimony, but also of the capacity of the exhibition to include it" (127). Canclini's emphasis on inclusion tacitly means that if some groups of people are included, others are excluded: those not included are usually less well-known peoples or groups, who were not close to

the dominant classes or the dominant orders of the day. Canclini concedes this as being a problem in most museums, stating that not everything can possibly be fit in to an exhibition: "The virtue of the [museum] institution is to offer at once the totality of the cultures […] and the impossibility of knowing them" (127). In Obama Ondo's case, the idea is similar but the actual dynamic of it is the other way around: there are indeed a great many people on a given subway train at any moment, but, where in the museum one cannot make out the nuanced details of the marginalized classes, in the subway one cannot make out clearly just what the powerful and dominant classes are doing. The subway becomes a museum for the middle classes and the lumpenproletariat, not just for the privileged. Additionally, the underground car is an interactive space, where one can move around, smell, and hear the very elements that one might contemplate and reflect upon in a much more cold and distant fashion in a museum. Unlike the latter, the metro is alive and is changing moment by moment.

Canclini did not only write about the nationalistic culture of museums and how they related to modernity, but also on dissidence, political incorrectness, and freedom of expression. For he writes that freedom of expression is another hallmark of modern societies, a categorization used to separate advanced societies from the socially and politically backward ones. Canclini writes that

> [i]n modern societies, when some power outside the field […] wants to intervene in the internal dynamics of artistic work by means of censorship, artists suspend their confrontations in order to form an alliance in defense of 'freedom of expression.' (16)

In other words, paramount to modernity is the idea of freely being able to write, read, and speak one's mind. One of most outrageous burials in Ndongo's text occurs near the beginning of the novel, when an elder tribeswoman, the protagonist's grandmother, named Okomo Asumu Ondo, warns the inhabitants of the advent of colonialism, and of the arrival of white men, guns, and a cross:

> Preparaos –dijo- porque están en camino unos asombrosos
> espectros blancos, de apariencia humana, lacias cabelleras dorados,
> ojos de colores y la barba crecida hasta el pecho como penachos de
> maíz, que traen tubos que escupen el rayo y el trueno, que os
> reducirán a la nada. (98)

She later draws a cross in the dirt, "en forma de dos palos cruzados" (98), a sign for the the soon-to-arrive Christian missionaries. The inhabitants of Mbalmayo do not receive her warnings with open ears, and kill her[55], carving up her body into fragmented parts[56], and then placing each of the parts in a different space, "trocito a trocito en hoyitos distantes y muy profundos" (99). The burial reveals a hard-to-swallow truth about modernity. One, that modernity in the European sense is strongly influenced by colonial ideas, and while White European society pays lip-service to freedom of expression, it often in effect slaughters its subjects for expressing any ill-gotten opinion. Modern society is thus revealed to be a contradictory mess of censorial oppression and freedom of speech. The fact that it is the townspeople themselves that murder and slaughter her to pieces suggests that all is okay in the name of "free expression" so long as no one makes

[55] This is actually the second time they kill the *abuela.* She came back to life after the first murder.
[56] The idea being that, this time, she will not be able to come back from the dead.

any connection between the dots. By keeping a respectable distance between one piece and another, dissent is tolerated (suppressed, in reality). The murder scene also serves as a metaphorical indictment of so-called first-world colonial nations and their attempts to separate themselves morally from the poverty and violence in so-called third-world countries, when actually the developed nations are so deeply interconnected and interrelated with the violence elsewhere that in order to hide their complicit and hideous relationship their connections must be buried, and buried with haste. This imagery ingeniously reveals the seams at which the colonial West often contradicts itself. To camouflage the contradiction, it buries the discrepancy, while simultaneously spawning an army of colonial servants, Spivak's famously labeled "buffer group" (mentioned also in Chapter 2) informants of the native classes who work to uphold colonial privilege, white supremacy, and European hegemony. In the novel these informants are the townspeople that bury the grandmother.

The narrative voice, which changes briefly into the third person plural, describes the general populace as zealously guarding a sort of faux innocence, and as killing the one person who was not afraid to speak bluntly about her own thoughts on the future:

> Tampoco hicimos caso de sus exorcismos y premoniciones, porque entonces se desató la furia contra ella y, harto de los manipuladores de las ciencias ocultas que habían descencadenado los males sobre la Tierra, enloquecido por tanta desventura, aterrorizado por aparición tan inusual, el pueblo entero cayó sobre la bruja como un

solo hombre, y fue apaleada hasta la muerte, descuartizada y enterrada de nuevo. (99)

Note that the grandmother is negatively targeted because of her alleged practices of the occult, or "las ciencias ocultas." There is a sort of clash in the beginning of the novel between two distinct forms of witchcraft, (1) the *brujería* brought in by the soft colonialism of the French missionaries, and (2) the "ciencias ocultas" of a resisting party, the dissident locals of Mbalmayo, struggling to keep their local traditions and customs alive. Geschiere, commenting on the relationship between coloniality, politics, and African practices of the occult, specifically regarding *djambe*, makes it very clear that in parts of Cameroon, there is a fragile relationship between the so-called occult forces in village life and the villagers' traditions and the "new forms of authority imposed by the state subsequent to colonial conquest" (27). One of the biggest sources of tension in Cameroonian villages is the top-down approach the postcolonial governments have in dealing with small-town improvements and modernization projects. Many government representatives in the West African nation are culled from the towns, and leave for the bigger cities. They distance themselves from the people, and when they come back, they no longer have their hometown locality's interest at heart.

Geschiere notes that in the years following decolonization, the 1950s and 1960s, "the departure of French administrators gave a new, educated elite access to important positions. Through this, unprecedented inequalities arose that undermined the old order" (97). Villagers such as those in Mbalmayo could utilize *djambe*, then, as a way of re-establishing sociopolitical harmony, in spite of a modern political system that has

followed the rubric of power and control established earlier by the departed European metropole.

The connection between colonial apartheid, its hierarchical constitution, and the European philosophies that help justified could not be more complete, in a subtle allusion to the one-size-fits all application of Kantian Enlightenment principles (the town coming together in one body, as if it were "un solo hombre") taking shape and molding native but soon-to-be colonial subjectivities. Creepily anticipating the dynamics of colonial violence and inner-tribal warfare that would take place in post-1884 Africa,[57] Ndongo pinpoints the beginnings of a nascent class of "native informants" who would defer to colonialists all the while craving a piece of the territorial pie that they could exclusively call their own, and rise to power according to the European rubric of ascension in colonial black Africa. These would be the same subjects that would later give birth to Africa's most ambitious and colonially valued dictators, leaders, and rulers well into the twentieth century and even into the twenty-first. The very idea that an entire group of people can fall in line and become one, and the ciphered colonial gendering of the one as a male body ("como un solo hombre") brings to mind the image of a rationalized European male body, and another image of human subjects obeying his ideas on how to become successful nations. The collective becomes the European male's version of an acceptable body, a nation that at once is primed for European development and exploitation. The collective becomes a social body that becomes estranged from itself, not only accepting

[57] Niyi Afolabi, in his book *The Golden Cage* (2001), writes of 1884-85 as being the founding year of European colonization of Africa at its apogee, describing as the Westerners' conquer-and-claim "scramble for Africa" (p. 6). Colonization had already begun much earlier, with Portuguese and Spanish sailors arriving in the 15th and 16th centuries, and then later with Francophone incursions in the mid 19th century (France in the Maghreb in the 1830s).

new external ideas, but wholly sacrificing one culture for the sake of The True Culture, The Indivisible Culture, The Culture of Man according to the Enlightenment rubric of universal freedom and tutelage to be prescribed to the wild and unruly African boy. This idea of maturity and of manhood is found implicit in one of Kant's most famous essays, in which he writes that enlightenment comes to the person who will consciously "exit out of their self-incurred immaturity" (*What is Enlightenment?* 62). For Kant, the adult was anyone who was mature enough "to use their own reason" (62). In terms of coloniality, this meant the conquerors were the only ones adult and rational enough to tell the indigenous colonized "children" just what was good for them. At the heart of Kant's analysis is the body of mature reason tearing apart the singular undeveloped body of a boy to prepare it for the secular religion of Enlightenment thought, a *pensée* in which there is only one path appropriate for development, and where all other alternatives and vias of exploration are suspect.

Canclini implies that modern nations and peoples had "a sociopolitical ordering based on the formal and material rationality that-as we read in thinkers ranging from Kant to Weber-has become the common sense of the West, the model of public space in which citizens would live together democratically and participate in the evolution of society" (7). His words betray the idea, common in Western mentalities, that there is a linear line in which all peoples, typified as uncivilized children, must follow if they wish to one day achieve a true and convincing state of development, not emotionally, but politically, socially, and economically. The erroneous assumption that Ndongo is rightly criticizing revolves around the Eurocentric paradigm that the West's prescribed ideas of

development are the *only* acceptable ideas of being. The author does this while simultaneously condemning the complicity of certain African subjects in acquiescing to the colonial order, destroying their very own people, along with their customs and unique cultural practices. This veneration of colonial thought and the consequent displacement and devalorization of indigenous values –to the extent that they are erradicated, and buried like Asumu Ondo's body- applies to colonized African geographies as well as to other spaces dominated and torn apart by European conquest, namely Asia, Latin America, and parts of the Middle East. Canclini observes the effect this reification of European power has had on a class which benefitted from colluding with its masters, including himself as a Latin American inheritor of colonization:

> […] the general opinion exists that although liberalism and its regime of parliamentary representativeness reached our constitutions, we lack a modern social cohesion and political culture sufficiently established to allow our societies to be governable. The political bosses continue to handle political decisions on the basis of informal alliances and wild relations of force. (7)

One can see a parallel between Canclini's description of the "wild relations of force" and the violence carried out against the Asumu Ondo in Ndongo's text. The cutting up of the woman's body is a brutal example that, while tragic and gratuitously bloody, serves nonetheless as a perfect example of a certain violent savagery that colonialism encouraged in its dominated populaces and city centers. The body also serves as a sort of

metonymy for Africa, fragmented, carved up, and divided into different nation-states, a painful process that divided families and tribes in uneasy ways, stirring up conflict due to what Afolabi has described as the fabrication of "artificial boundaries and unnatural frontiers or borders" (30). As Ndongo put it in an interview: "Tenemos en cuenta […] que hay diferentes etnias en Guinea Ecuatorial y que esas etnias han sido amalgamadas en unas fronteras por la situación colonial" ("Una conversación" 263). The social body of the African continent had been split open to what would later become, at best, scar tissue. Being that the woman, Asumu Ondo, is referred to as a grandmother, or "abuela" (the title also refers to her relationship with Obama Ondo) it could also be conjectured that this entire scene is a rendition of the shameful violence that has been done to "Mother Africa," a general theme in Sub-Saharan African poetics, especially in compositions by the poet (and former Angolan President) António Agostinho Neto.[58] On just as painful of a note, but perhaps along more optimistic lines, the distancing of Mother Africa's body parts to different regions perhaps is a wink to the revolutionary African poetry of the fifties and sixties, when poets would write of regeneration and of revolution. The revolutionary consciousness that would sprout up on the African continent in the post-World War II milieu would also be tied in with the imagery here, of a body coming back to life in several spots after having been decimated morally, politically, and physically by European colonialism.

[58] See *The Golden Cage*, p. 4, for the poem "Adeus à hora da largada" ("Farewell at The Hour of Parting"). There is constant reference to "Minha Mãe," which Afolabi refers to as a common "Mother Africa" trope in Lusophone African literature.

What is crucial about this death of the "bruja," or "abuela," is actually that it is her second death in the narrative. Alive and well during the early life and times of Obama Ondo's respected grandfather, the revered chief or "jefe" Ebang Motuú. The grandmother's influence, however unheeded by the Mbalmayo townspeople and coinciding with Chief Ebang Motuú, points to a significant embrace of multiple truths, notably absent during the following generations, who experience Christianity's colonization and the conquest of Africa. Thus there is a noteworthy distinction between the concept of *truths* in the plural before the dawn of colonialism, and the overzealous emphasis on one single truth, referred to by the narrator as "la Única Verdad," hailing in an era of intolerance toward the indigenous peoples' belief systems. The second burial of the "abuela," who comes back as a ghost to haunt the generation that grew up under colonization, is significant because it marks a transition toward a sort of thinking where there is only one truth, and everything else is impure and marginalized as dirty and unclean. It is in the genesis of "la Única Verdad" that one can understand the limited and Eurocentric meaning of modernity that has had so much influence and cachet up until the present. There is an important tie between the imagery of "abuela" Osumu Ondo's second burial, where as a ghost she is cut up into pieces and buried all over the confines of Mbalmayo, and the novel's title and centerpiece, the metro. Buried underground and full of different pathways bending in a myriad of directions, the subway very much resembles, in its structure, Deleuze's and Guattari's rhizomes, where there is a "multiplicity" instead of the "dichotomous root" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 6). The subway is a spot where there is chaos, disorder, and, as evidenced from the beginning of Ndongo's

text, ruins. It is a filthy space, a place associated with dirt and with animals (the association with the "grombif" on the text's opening page). The metro is more embracing of multiple truths that go in all different directions. The stops are all over the city, stopping in Plaza de Mayo, Tribunal, Chueca, Lavapiés, and in other districts; Osumu Ondo's body is everywhere, representing repressed but multiple truths that contradict "la Única Verdad," which is religious, hegemonic, and official.

With the death and burial of Obama Ondo's grandfather and of his grandmother Osumu Ondo can help the reader to understand the subway and the significance of its locus on a whole other level. The underground tunnels that act as pluralistic possibilities for travel and as leading to a multitude of destinations can be understood as a contemporary metaphor for a multiplicity of ways of being. If the death of the elder generation signifies the burial of pluralistic thought, then on a similar note, the space of the *metro* plays with the very understanding of a multiple exits and entrances, and toys with what Anne McClintock calls "the prestige of history proper," displacing the coloniality of a Eurocentric narrative.

The end of so-called "history proper" is alluded to when neo-Nazis tragically murder Obama Ondo in the Metro station at the end of the novel. It is precisely because he was engaging in Canclini's earlier definition of modernity, where "everything gets mixed together," that they kill him. They are angry that he is able to successfully date white women, as well as the sexual and racial implications this will have for the future. With white power diminished through the miscegenation of the races, Spain becomes less determined by a white colonialist narrative, instead experimenting what Rosalía Cornejo

Polar referred to as "un progresivo 'oscurecimiento' a lo largo de los siglos XX y XXI" (*Memoria colonial e inmigración* 17) of Spain. In this light, one can see the *metro* as a locus that foresees, albeit in a raw and violent vision, the dawning of a more multicultural and multiethnic society, and as a sort of house where Spain learns to mix with others and to live free of prejudice and inhibitions. I describe it as a "raw" vision because it is not a matured pluralistic society, but one at its beginnings. The neo-Nazis stomp and punch Obama Ondo in a subway car, in the process revealing their deep racial and sexual anxieties, as revealed by one of the attackers' words: "nunca más follarás con blancas, mono asqueroso, negro cabrón" (456). Returning to Beatriz Celaya's observations cited earlier in this chapter, the white supremacists are deeply concerned that their superiority is debatable once a black man is able to seduce a woman that, for racial and sexual reasons, they consider theirs ("De victorias o derrotas" 155).

It is significant that the train Obama Ondo was murdered on moves on to the next station, while the skinheads get off. In spite of the tragedy, the protagonist finds himself in what could be read as a moving casket, on a train that will carry him even in death. Hence Obama and his spirit move on, fomenting a new imagery of modernity, one led by the leadership of a black man. This would be, according to Cristián Ricci, "un modo de representación, que margina la monumentalidad de la Historia (contada por el europeo) y se mofa del poder español/católico como modelo" ("El discurso paródico afro-occidental" 970). The imagery of movement contrasts with the skinheads, who literally are left behind in the station where they got off, stuck in a stagnant and illusory eternity of zero change and zero movement. As Mahan L. Ellison points out, "While the

skinheads in the Lucero Metro Station dehumanize, stereotype, and ultimately murder Lambert Obama Ondo, *The Metro* achieves the opposite effect" ("Oikos" 174), humanizing a diverse and Africanized Spain. Yet there is much more that precedes this scene of burial in a train car that also speaks to matters relating to modernity and to witchcraft, and that are not quite as tragic.

In conclusion, this chapter has analyzed the social implications of six burials that occur in Ndongo's novel: (1) Dorothée Oyana, (2) the cannibal politician and the buried cadaver of the deer/man, (3) Okomo Asumu Ondo, (4) Monsieur Didone Bithegue, (5) Monsieur Rémy Eboué, and finally of the main protagonist (6) Lambert Obama Ondo. All the burials in some sense or another lead to a feeling that there is an important generational rupture going on, where human relations between men and women are being redefined in manners that are not exclusively centered around biology and around anatomy. Men are working to become more emotionally intelligent, and more open to communicating with their families, and women are losing their fear of separating from men when they feel it is in their own best interests. Both are losing their fears that if they do not continue to subscribe to the behaviors and norms of their preceding generations that they will be failures. With regards to Obama Ondo's actual travels to Iberia and his experiences in Spain, Spanish definitions of modernity are too entrenched in the colonial mentality of the original conquests on other continents starting in the sixteenth century. Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein remind us that "The modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century" ("Americanity as a Concept" 549), precisely when Spain was beginning its conquest, both with guns and with baptism, to separate

people from their local customs. Five hundred years later, elements of this mentality persist, but with the rise of migration and non-European residents in Spain, it becomes possible to imagine a version of modernity that follows the experiences and direction of the African subjects arriving on the Peninsula. As contemporary migrants make Spain's relation with the continent to the south evermore relevant, the old version of modernity, rigid in its ideas on gender and Eurocentric to the detriment of ex-colonial subjectivities, can be buried and put to rest. Perhaps then the globe can become a healthy space where humans can live happily among the peers that they were raised with, should they wish to do so. One such literary text that could also serve as future study regarding *djambe* and African modernity in Equatorial Guinea would be to analyze María Nsue Angue's 1985 *Ekomo*, which at parts pits modern medicine with the work of *ngangas*, or traditional healers. It would not hurt to seriously consider Obama Ondo's personal thoughts where he intends to unite in solidarity with "los esfuerzos de sus paisanos para conseguir que su patria también conquistara la libertad y el desarrollo y sus hijos no tuvieran necesidad de huir" (447). To concentrate on creating freedom regardless of one's class or gender, a space where all have the freedom to express themselves and to speak their minds without fear of persecution, this would indeed be a much more modern world that has finally, after so much time, entered what could properly be called a modernity.

Chapter 4

Gender, Burial, and the Confession: Loosening of the "passionate attachments" in Mohamed Bouissef Rekab's *El motín del silencio*

> "Why does Rabeya wear the full burqa?" I asked Fasiq while sitting on the roof. Blunt hanging from his lips, he closed up the Qur'an and placed it on his right. Took a hit before replying. […]
> "Ever have a day when you didn't want people looking at you?"
> "Yeah," I replied, "I guess so. Is that why she wears it?"
> "I don't know," he said with a puff and then dramatic exhale. "But that's why *I'd* wear it." (*The Taqwacores* 88-89)

The main objective of this chapter is to analyze how Mohamed Bouissef Rekab Luque's[59] portrayal of two protagonists conveys the message that confession culture causes women to suppress and to bury other aspects of their lives that are just as important, thus negatively affecting their ability to live liberated and free lives. In her study on subjection, Judith Butler (*The Psychic Life of Power*, 1997) wrote about "passionate attachments," where human beings exacerbate their enslavement by trying to separate themselves from what they perceive to be an outside oppressor. I argue that one of the protagonists, Zohra, exacerbates her enslavement to oppressive ideas on the feminine by confessing her problems to her father, Taieb. Both the daughter Zohra and her mother Farah struggle with their relationship to their "passionate attachments," but they find different ways of dealing with them, and so we find in one case a woman who has not been able to free herself, while the other has.

[59] From here on out the author will be referred to as Bouissef Rekab.

Westerners are fascinated with the veil; in fact, they seem to fetishize it. In an article written for the *Moroccan World News*, Emily Goshey, an American who had studied abroad in Rabat, writes: "It is interesting to me that the issue of veiling is so fascinating to Westerners despite the fact that among Muslims, even for those who feel strongly one way or the other, it is an issue of secondary importance at most" ("Living in Morocco"). Goshey is describing the West's overbearing and paternalistic fetishism of the various types of fashions and dress that are sometimes worn by Muslim women, such as the *hijab* and the *niqab.* Her ideas on fetishized clothing have been seconded by established scholars in the field (Cornell 2001; Berger 1998; Irigaray 1985). In this chapter I would like to go beyond this fetishization, because I think it is connected to a Western mentality that Foucault (1978) has identified as the obsession with confessing. As the French philosopher once put it, "Western man has become a confessing animal" (59). It is the author's position that Westerners are obsessed with the veil because it fails to confess, and in the West we are indoctrinated to confess and to open up, and to sometimes an extreme degree.[60] One can see this on Facebook, with the constant status updates, and at the beach, where men and women show off their chiseled, and beautiful, bodies. In the 2006 novel *El motín del silencio*,[61] Moroccan author Bouissef Rekab introduces us to two female protagonists, Farah and her daughter Zohra, who experience

[60] In contrast, Parvati Nair (2003-2004) has plainly stated, "The veil, as marker of resistance, threatens and incites fear" (43). It strikes fear in those who do not understand its various meanings, and because it conceals any confession that Westerners have already disclosed. It is frightening for the same reason that anything is frightening: it is different from the norm and therefore threatens the validity of the dominant "normal" lifestyle in Western societies. To the question, "Who goes there?" the veil answers with a simple and succinct "none of your business." It makes people question why they are so proud that they unquestioningly reveal everything, and make everything that can be seen, seeable.

[61] From here on the text will be referred to as *Silencio.*

disappointment in their marriages. The former experiences a sense of empowerment, while the latter is haunted by feelings of guilt and incompetence. Before delving into further analysis, I will briefly talk about the author and then give a brief synopsis of his novel.

Bouissef Rekab is a writer who is a native of Tetouan, in the north of Morocco. He has worked as a university professor, as a radio announcer for a Spanish-language Moroccan station, as a high school instructor, and as a respected and innovative fiction writer. He has written to date ten novels, all in Spanish, his most recent being *La señora*, published in 2010. His work explores the ongoing contemporary and postcolonial relationship between Spain and Morocco. Cristián Ricci (2014) has written that "Mohamed Bouissef Rekab es uno de los más prolíficos escritores marroquíes de expresión castellana" (*¡Hay moros en la costa!* 87). The novelist is also, according to Ricci, talented at developing an *oeuvre* he can describe in harrowing detail "el desfase entre las mentalidades representativas de las distintas capas sociales y resaltar las diferencias entre los distintos géneros sexuales" (89). This observation will be particularly salient in *Silencio,* where he challenges work norms among the gender binary in Morocco. Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo has observed that the author, along with his other Moroccan contemporaries, "is often interested in exploring their [Moroccans'] dysfunctional, hybrid, cultural heritage" (186-187). In the case of *Motín*, this "dysfunctional" would be the current state of Moroccan migration to Spain. The novel also uniquely explores the connections between the burial of a patriarchal figure and migration between Spain and Morocco. It relates the story of a Moroccan Tetouani

family, headed by the once-married Farah and Taieb, whose daughter Zohra leaves for Spain, where she meets her husband and they get married and have children in Toledo. Thus the novel approaches the thematics of family generations, and it is these generations that will be united by Farah back in Tetouan during the burial of the deceased Taieb. Revolving, then, around the death of a family *paterfamilias*, Taieb Serifi, and the subsequent reunification of his family from both sides of the Mediterranean, the book creates a re-imagining of space as being a locus for female leadership. Full of flashbacks between the present and different times of the past, the text illustrates the movement of the family between two shores. The novel starts with an aged and lonely Taieb shaving at at his Tetouani house, and then flashes back to the way life was both before and after divorce. Having been already divorced for years, the elder gentleman is portrayed as having fallen apart into disarray, no longer under the loving care of who is now his ex-wife, Farah.

The commonality that unifies Bouissef Rekab's work to the others in this study is the burial of subjectivities. By subjectivities I am referring to the understanding that human beings are not just one identity: they bring multiple, overlapping, and contradictory thoughts, ideas, and attitudes to the table. What I would like to emphasize is that in Morocco there is a different conception of freedom than in the West. In the West we pretend that we are not social beings: we believe in the "Self-Made Man" ideology, in which, miraculously, a single person is able to live in a vacuum from society and, with hard work, accumulate power, wealth, and prestige. They are able to live and thrive all by themselves, and alone. This is the ideology in the West, and especially in the

United States. There is very little room for a social network, or any kind of sympathy for collective welfare. A certain raw individualism is what resonates. It is in many ways a beautiful philosophy, but that is all it is, a philosophy. It is not the only one.

In Morocco there is a strong sense of family. A patriarchal family, but a family nonetheless. It is to this family that subjectivity is formed in Bouissef Rekab's text. This is the social unit to which Moroccan subjects develop their passionate attachments. They grow up in it, and their surroundings constantly reinforce the validity of their experiences and feelings. As Butler is quick to observe:

> No subject emerges without a passionate attachment to those on whom he or she is fundamentally dependent (even if that passion is 'negative' in the psychoanalytic sense). Although the dependence of the child is not *political* subordination in any usual sense, the formation of primary passion in dependency renders the child vulnerable to subordination and exploitation, a topic that has become a preoccupation of recent political discourse. (7)

Thus power is social, and one both has power and is subject to it. The degree to which a person is dependent and/or has agency depends on the society that they have grown up in, but the idea is that a person is a reflection, to an extent, of their society, because this milieu has formed them and their disposition to life, politics, and the general world at large. The Moroccan family is the central unit of subjectivity formation, and as such, the child who grows up in this family learns to depend upon the family and, more importantly, to constantly consider the family in *all* of his or her considerations. This is

the environment that Farah, once married to Taieb, and mother to Zohra, their biological daughter, knows so well. The power has birthed them and they have extracted the tools to living from its inheritance. Power, then, is not entirely external. Again we return to Butler: "Foucault's reformulation of subordination as that which is not only pressed on a subject but forms a subject, that is, is pressed on a subject by its formation, suggests an ambivalence at the site where the subject emerges (7)." Butler's use of Foucauldian philosophy helps us understand that the individual exists, but only in a social context. One hundred percent pure separation from the tribe is impossible, for psychically, emotionally, and spiritually, the family's influence leaves its mark on the individual. Farah is much more cognizant of this than her daughter Zohra, as we will see.

4.1 Non-Confession as a Strategy for Fighting *Assujettissement*

The reason that I brought up the veil in the first page of this chapter is paradoxical. On the one hand, neither Farah nor Zorah wear the veil. But they come from a society where the veil is justified religiously and socially, and where many women *do* wear it. My interest is in the overall mentality of a culture where the veil is sustained as a viable, and fashionable, piece of clothing. The purpose of the veil is to protect and to play with the imagination: it covers up what is there behind it, yet it does not cancel out its existence. No matter what, the body that the veil covers is still there. The difference, culturally speaking, is how citizens in different regions of the world understand the relationship between the veil and the body. This is where both Foucault and Butler become essential to discussing Bouissef Rekab's *Silencio.* The veil guards a distinct

relation with the Foucauldian confession, which is a form of disclosure that reveals, supposedly, one's identity. Foucault problematized the confession culture as leading to identity politics: ethnically, one could be Black or Latino or Asian; in terms of sexuality, one could be heterosexual or homosexual. The end idea was that one's identity defined a person in everything he or she did. According to Foucault:

> The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also […] a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation. (62)

It might be considered odd to contemplate and to contest Foucauldian and Butlerian philosophies in a discussion of Moroccan literature. Yet it is undeniable that confession is a key part of Bouissef Rekab's text, which contains some epistolary confessions in its narrative. Zohra, for example, writes confessional letters to her father, in which she admits that her marriage has lost its emotional excitement and *jouissance* and that she is no longer a happy spouse. It is understandable that Foucault and Butler hail from the West, but I am for that reason arguing that Zohra is, in part, also from the West. She is at least *westernized*: at seventeen or eighteen she left Morocco for Spain, where she attended university. She has chosen to stay there and to establish herself: she marries her husband Tarik there, and they live together in Toledo. Therefore, part of Zohra's cultural formation is the West, and this is where her subjectivity coincides with the philosophies

of both a famous French philosopher and a famous Berkeley thinker. It is also why her confessions fail to liberate her.

Zohra, in her letters to her father in Tetouan, is writing to a Moroccan audience, where the social rules are different. Her Western approach is what keeps her from being able to lift the weight of guilt and self-doubt from her shoulders. Confession, as a Western practice, does not work in Morocco. It does not work to the same degree as it may in the West. Zohra's problems are hybrid and complex: her lack of feelings for her husband and the latter's lack of touch and sexual attention are, yes, a matrimonial challenge, but her emotional understandings are steeped both in Spanish and Moroccan social mores. For Zohra to write her confession to her father is an action that will be read in terms of its fall out for the family. In one of her letters, Zohra writes that her soul is "destrozado" (123), explaining that due to having to forget about his own ambitions, her husband Tarik begins to distance himself from her. Confessing to her father, she stirs up an emotional scar that will later drive her to live a life of abnegation and, to a certain degree, of repression. Freedom for Zohra will only be experienced as something ephemeral and passing, and not as a central possessing identity such as in the case of her mother. The sudden absence of Tarik in her life will drive Zohra to become melancholic, and to mourn for a displaced mother:

> Querido papá:
>
> […] A costa de mucho sacrificio conseguí una carrera y pude
>
> ponerme a trabajar. Desgraciadamente mi marido no pudo estudiar,

> que era lo que más deseaba; renunció a su carrera para que yo
> pudiera hacer la mía […]
> Esto hizo que mi marido cambiara de comportamiento conmigo.
> (123)

The response that Zohra gets is posthumous, as it comes after her father's death. In fact, his response is not read until the Serifi family gets together for Taieb's burial. His body absent, the patriarchal figure haunts the present in order to exercise a sort of power to control the contemporary conditions and realities of his family. The family understands that the man had a lot of negative aspects to him, but they also look to him for leadership. In her writings to her father before he passes away, Zohra confesses that: "Mi único afán de momento es que nuestra familia se una y comience una nueva vida; que todos los que estamos unidos por la sangre, nos queramos y respetemos purificando nuestra alma, ofreciendo lo mejor que poseemos (124)." The dependence of Zohra on her father's advice and/or the search for comfort indicates that she very much looks for emotional support from her father. She is conscious that she depends on her family for help; she is aware that she is independent but there is a rubric that has framed her independence, and it came from Taieb and from her mother Farah. This falls in line with Butler's observation that "[n]o individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing 'subjectivation'" (13). Butler is referring to the process of *assujetissement*, and she sees it as being partly rooted in one's familial upbringing:

> Let us consider that a subject is not only formed in subordination,
> but that this subordination provides the subject's continuing

> condition of possibility. A child's love is prior to judgement and decision; a child tended and nourished in a 'good enough' way will love, and only later stand a chance of discriminating among those he or she loves […] if the child is to persist in a psychic and social sense, there must be dependency and the formation of attachment […] (8)

While power may be recycled and perpetuated within the family unit, it usually protects and fortifies a much bigger and greater power, one that works at a macrolevel, overarching the *paterfamilias.* This is why, in a metaphorical sense, it is important to understand the sociopolitical significance of the relationship between Taieb's death in the summer of 1999 as roughly occurring at the same time that a much more politically powerful father figure passes away. I am referring to the passing of King Hassan II on 23 July 1999.

With this double death of a patriarchy being the novel's chronological starting point, one sees that the novel is closely tied with Morocco's transition and transformation from an oppressive and traditional country to a nation that is beginning to embrace modernity in a contradictory and paradoxical manner: a country where women are beginning to wear *hijab* for personal reasons, more related to fashion and personal expression, than because of political and religious orthodoxy. Importantly, the millenial transition does not even mean that Islam and Moroccan history are irrelevant to Moroccan society; the idea is that with both the *Mudawana* (the legal Moroccan family code) and Farah's divorce, women are beginning to take action and re-define their

relationship to society, thus challenging the limits and societal definitions of gender. They are not cutting themselves off from society, but rather taking their passionate attachments, their emotional and social engagements and obligations to their families, and applying their doubts, ideas, and feelings to a world that had previously only been structured around the male and his concerns. So whether what Farah is engaging is a revolution is certainly possible, but it is not where an individual or community burns down the past and their connections to the most important unit of society, the family. In fact, one would have to take into account that at the turn of the twenty-first century, it would probably be outside of social intelligibility for a woman to do away with her family and husband and plausibly survive in Moroccan society. So to socially thrive *and* question the dominant social order and political paradigms, one would have to make sure they were on passably good terms with their brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, children, and grandchildren and whoever else may be in the domestic circle. As one can see, the dawning millennium was (and still is) a fertile time for change in Moroccan gender relations, as five years after 1999 the law would recognize women's right to autonomy. Bouissef Rekab's novel is straddling the social scene in Morocco while following the social and legal change in the status of women.

Upon first reading *Silencio*, one may understand it as embracing certain aspects of female liberties in the Maghreb nation, especially the right of women to work in a well-paid and relatively high-ranking job, but as a whole one may opine that the text is being reactionary to the implications of this new-found female social autonomy. Upon subsequent readings it becomes evident that Farah is not a subject who can entirely

disregard the social milieu in which she has been raised and socialized- to a degree, she is a product of her environment, but she is also able to process how she feels about that environment, and thus is able to forge a new and unique relationship to those surroundings. This capacity to reflect frees her from living the life of an automaton, free from a genderized slavery to a dominant male order. She becomes aware that the dominant order is what informs the subjectivity of her conscious, and that she has consented to becoming a prisoner to this societal conscious, indirectly contributing to the calcification of dissidence in a society that has convinced her that she has no voice. Butler observes, "Subjection is, literally, the *making* of a subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced. Such subjection is a kind of power that not only unilaterally acts on a given individual as a form of domination, but also activates or forms the subject" (84). What is important here is that Farah seems to be growing evermore cognizant that she has the agency to challenge this unilateral pattern of patriarchal power, and as we will see, her revolt will begin by challenging the power dynamics in her marriage to an older man.

One way that Farah begins to challenge conventions is when she begins to reflect on the motive of her abnegation of personal feeling at the cost of submitting to the whims of Taieb. The unilateral power that Butler describes is one that the narrator, switching between the third-person and first-person perspectives, uses to describe Farah's former marriage and sex life with Taieb:

> Llevaba una vida ritual y rutinaria que la [Farah] ponía nerviosa.
>
> Cuando el hombre sentía la llamada de la carne –muy pocas veces

> al mes-, también seguía una serie de rituales que la sacaban de quicio. Rezaba al-isa', la última oración del día y le decía que al día siguiente iría al baño turco – Era el modo de indicarme que me preparara porque esa noche él quería hacer el amor; y lo que más me molestaba era que, paradójicamente, terminaba tomándose su par de cervezas después del acto sexual-. Se acercaba a ella después de apagar todas las luces… Lo dejaba hacer lo que quería sin participar en el acto. (33)

As Farah reflects on how she ever married Taieb, it is clear that she made the decision because she felt she had no other opportunities and no say in the matter: she took for granted the idea that women have no voice. It is from this particular source of inner turmoil that the novel appears to get its title: *El motín del silencio* roughly translates as "The Mutiny of Silence," or "The Uprising of Silence." A principle regret of Farah's is not having ever spoken up about how she never wanted the marriage with Taieb in the first place. The novel's title makes a special emphasis on the problems that occur when people tacitly say yes by not speaking up, and when they consent to a certain reality by not objecting to it. It is a beautiful title, one that speaks to the close ties between the personal and the political:

> Cuando mis padres decidieron casarme con un hombre que no conocía y que era mayor que yo, debí negarme rotundamente. Nunca debí callarme cuando los adules me preguntaron si quería casarme con ese señor; ellos habrían tomado la decision de no

llevar a término esa boda… Porque el no o el sí de la mujer es
indispensable para casarla con un hombre. Y yo, estúpida de mí,
me callé y he pagado con creces ese silencio. (86)

Foucault has observed the influence of the clan in subjectivity formation, noting that like other apparatuses, the family functions as a mechanism "with a double impetus: pleasure and power. The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it" (*The History of Sexuality* 45). If the collective network of family can induce as much pleasure, in the form of status, prestige, or comfort, as it can administer power, then one can see the double-edged sword that comes with identifying oneself as a member. Marrying into a family can, for some, increase their status. This was in part why Farah was married to Taieb in the first place. Simone de Beauvoir has also summarily described some marriages as a relationship where subjects, however marginalized, can attain visibility, or at least "social standing" (*The Second Sex* 1269). Yet Farah divorces Taeib after years of feeling that she is no longer realizing her own dreams and ambitions: for example, Taieb prohibits her from working at a well-paying job. After many years of marriage, Farah gets him to agree to a divorce. She later is able to get a high-responsibility post in a factory with an increased salary. She also begins dating a man who is younger than her.

It is at this junction in the text, when she begins to date outside of her marriage, that Farah's social status as a respectable wife begins to suffer. The pressure to question her decision to divorce has effects that are both physical and psychological: she can only

date her coworker by going on clandestine excursions. In the meantime, psychologically she begins to feel a distance grow between her and her daughter Zohra, who sees her mother as a dishonorable woman. As Farah returns back from her outings with the handsome Hafid, she tries to sneak back into her house so that Zohra will suspect nothing. Nevertheless, Zohra finds out, and, having internalized Moroccan society's teachings that women who date after having been married (even when already divorced) are dirty and undeserving of human respect, begins to look down on her mother, but without ever making these feelings explicitly known.

Farah's feelings of guilt later increase because she knows that little Zohra suspects of her, and therefore understands that her own daughter despises her. The rapprochement displayed by Zohra in various parts of the beginning of the text demonstrates the forms in which "power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity" (Butler 3). This idea that subjection can result from internalized understandings of power, and not on external elements such as punishment and the gun, is embodied in the dynamic of shaming that occurs through young Zohra's silence. The daughter's silence serves to interpellate the mother's consciousness, and Farah doubts her own status as mother, and indeed, her own ability to act responsibly as an ethical Moroccan parent. Butler observes that "[i]n the exchange by which that recognition is proferred and accepted, interpellation --- the discursive production of the social subject --- takes place" (5). Farah narrates her daughter's silent non-verbal interpellation at their vacation home, just after beginning to date her new suitor:

> En Río Martín apenas nos veíamos Zohra y yo, pero bastaba que nos cruzáramos por el pasillo de la casa para que me mirara con ojos acusadores sin decir ni una palabra, sin siquiera saludar, haciéndome enrojecer cada vez que el hecho ocurría; me inculpaba de cosas que no se atrevía o no quería decir; y mis elucubraciones me hacían preguntarme incesantemente: ¿sabía algo de mis relaciones con Hafid? (*Motín* 60)

This rumination comes in the context of a social situation that transgresses conservative Moroccan customs, for Farah wonders who will see her dating other men, especially when, as she observes, "Moroccan society is not forgiving" (*Silencio* 38). Yet Farah continues to flaunt and to even transgress the region's social norms, accepting a higher-paying job, by which she even ends up earning more than Taieb, and after divorcing she later marries the younger Hafid, all while professing that she is no longer able to bear children. This background, which could coincide easily with many of feminism's cultural ideals, does not stop her from becoming an oddly domestic female leader, reuniting the entire clan from its European diaspora back to Tetouan to bury and inter Taieb when he later passes away. Farah's many qualms over having left the patriarch come back to haunt her.

But Farah's inner *motín* comes about as she begins to ask herself whose life she is living. She has a big, loving family, but even so she is not content. The easy step would have been not to do anything, and to simply follow the status quo, be a good wife, stay quiet, and simply do what Moroccans would expect her to do – raise Zohra and then

dissolve into the background, following all of Taieb's decisions. This certainly would have been her path: before the divorce, her ex-husband says to her at one point that "[u]na mujer debe seguir a su marido en todo; en lo bueno y en lo malo" (74). Farah later has the courage to understand her marriage not as a matrimony based on love and emotional caring, but rather on practical interests. This divorce is the original migration in the novel: an internal change of focus, a change of attitude from within, and a moral courage to move on from outdated expectations and a scripted idea of marriage, where the women marry men purely for money and men marry women for sex: "Seguro que ahora verás claramente que nuestra relación, la tuya conmigo, entre un hombre bastante mayor y una mujer joven, estaba basada en algo espiritual pero también en algo que tenía que ver con lo material (115)." She learns to migrate in the direction of her moral compass. By breaking up with the man with whom she had had a daughter, Farah selectively breaks ranks with Morocco's most important social unit. This rupture gives her the freedom to choose a man whom she actually loves and cares about (Hafid). It also creates the financial base necessary to enable movement to Spain, enabling the later free-flow movement of her family as it migrates to and fro betwixt the two continents.

That Farah would want to put an end to this cycle would make sense: neither she nor any other woman would be particularly happy with being married to an old-fashioned man who is much older (the age gap is never explicitly disclosed). It is not certain that she is cognizant of the effects her having married Taieb will have on her daughter. She appears to not fully be aware that her passionless marriage will be repeated in the relationship between Zohra and her husband, when Zohra grows up. What is remarkable,

however, is Farah's decisiveness in finally asking her husband for divorce, an act that before 2004 (she doe it before 1999) would have been quite difficult in Morocco. Marriage in Morocco has historically been a relationship in which men have the final word, and where women have very little voice. Fátima Mernissi, for example, writes that "Muslim marriage is based on male dominance" (xv). As a Muslim country, Mernissi writes that Moroccan views of family put the patriarch at the top of the hierarchy, with a social order under the father's control:

> The social order created by the Prophet, a patrilineal monotheistic state, could only exist if the tribe and its allegiances gave way to the *Umma* [Muslim community]. The Prophet found the institution of the family a much more suitable unit for socialization than the tribe. He saw the tightly controlled patriarchal family as necessary to the creation of the *Umma.* (41)

This would be the dominant legal and social paradigm for Moroccan Muslim families until the twenty-first century, when, as Susan Gilson Miller writes, "women's groups took to the street in well-organized marches in Rabat and Casablanca in March 2000 to urge the reform of the family code" (227). These protests galvanized a later response from King Mohammed VI. Cristián Ricci observes that in 2004, Morocco's *Mudawana* was overhauled to the extent that it became clearly more progressive and democratic with regard to the freedom of women to choose their marriage partners, the abolition of a male's right to repudiate his wife, 'the practically abolished' practice of polygamy, marriage, divorce, equal rights for men and women, child custody and alimony (*!Hay moros!* 99-100).

As Farah reflects on how she ever married Taieb, it is clear that she made the decision because she felt she had no other opportunities and no say in the matter: she took for granted the idea that women have no voice. But, as the years go on, and as she acquires more power at her job, she develops the courage to act upon her recognition of her quasi-enslaved existence to Taieb. It is this sense of internal and external movement that will be the first to excise the internal split in subjectivity that Farah was feeling. Much later in the novel, the protagonist reveals in an apostrophic address, during the showing of Taieb's cadaver in its casket, that "Con tu espíritu de libertad unilateral, lo que hacías era crear una guerra silenciosa entre dos mundos opuestos…. Un cuerpo esclavizado y un espíritu poseedor de la libertad de movimiento y de elección" (117).

In her own mind, Farah describes exactly what this internal war within meant for her in the marriage with Taieb: "Hiciste de mí una esclava; un cuerpo que tomabas cuando lo considerabas oportuno (117)." Her decision to divorce enables an entire series of events that takes her out of the tyranny of a static marriage. She certainly comes to having more control over nearly all aspects of her life. She now makes her own income, and plenty of it: "El tema económico conoció también su cambio: Farah aportaba dinero suficiente para vivir con holgura y para aumentar la cuenta bancaria de la hija. Esta objetividad económica hacia que Taieb, su viejo marido, no se pusiera por los aires" (57). She begins to refer to her new position and take on life as her own "personal revolution"- "Mi marido deberá entender mi posición cuando le diga que busco mi 'libertad' – me decía yo cuando empezó mi revolución personal" (58). Her professional promotion creates both career opportunities and social opportunities, as she is able to pick and

choose the men with whom she associates. One even sees an inward growth, where Farah develops the courage to speak with Taieb and to ask for divorce.

> Algo surgiría del fondo de mi corazón para explicarle que siempre le querría como a un verdadero amigo, pero que como esposo no podría aceptarlo en adelante, porque algo había nacido en mi vida que me daba nuevos bríos para seguir mi aventura en el mundo desarrollando otras actividades; tenía que hacerle entender que esa nueva diligencia había dado nueva savia a mi existencia y tenía que aprovecharla… (72-73)

This divorce is the original migration in the novel: an internal change of focus, a change of attitude from within, and the catalyst for ethical courage to move on from outdated expectations and a scripted idea of matrimony. By breaking up with the man with whom she had had her daughter, Farah selectively breaks ranks with Morocco's most important social unit, the family. This gives her the freedom not only to choose a man whom she actually loves and cares about, but it also creates the financial base necessary to enable movement to Spain, at least for Farah's daughter, once grown up.

Farah's economic position, combined with her amorous extramarital situation with a man of her choosing, leaves her the strength to discuss divorce with her elder husband:

> [Farah]: -Quiero la libertad… Quiero salir de esta casa…
>
> [Taieb]: - ¿Cómo te atreves a decir una cosa así? ¿No ves que Dios no permite que un hombre y su esposa estén separados?

-Pero sí permite que haya divorcio…

-¡Dios mío!... ¿El divorcio? ¿Te has vuelto loca?

-No… Sí. Estoy loca… Quiero el divorcio para hacer con mi vida lo que me plazca, y si sigo casada no podré realizarme como persona libre. (74)

In a culture where marriage is sacred and where divorce rarely occurs, it is quite refreshing and also unique to see a non-essentialized conception of personhood in this dialogue. Instead of saying "realizarme como mujer libre," Farah uses another term that does not allow for a binary conception of gender: "persona libre." Unlike her husband, who has talked about marriage as an institution created by God for a man and a woman ("un hombre y su esposa"), Farah refuses to follow her husband's framing of the argument. Farah is a woman, of course, but in terms of rights and obligations she is first and foremost a person, just like Taieb.

This is where the content of Bouissef Rekab's text directly begins to intersect with the consequences of confession and of non-confession. Except that what I am observing, when contrasting Zohra and her mother, is that Farah's will to act is precisely what is liberating her. Farah has been able to keep her family together while divorcing her husband. She has been able to keep her family identity intact, something that is very important for her. She has broken with part of her "passionate attachments," her husband, by staying mindful about precisely the rest of her family unit, which itself is also a passionate attachment. The protagonist has been able to juggle both roles, becoming both independent from Taieb but simultaneously dependent upon her role as an excellent

mother and aunt. She even stays in touch with both Abdelah and Mojtar, Taieb's brothers.

Some readers may argue that her continuing dialogue with Taieb's siblings is problematic, that to an extent Farah is a "sell-out" for having stayed in contact with Taieb's brothers. First of all, it was necessary to an extent so that she could get Taieb's house solely under Zohra's name, and it was also necessary because without being diplomatic with one's husband's family in Morocco, there is zero chance of having a successful divorce, and zero chance of continuing on with one's life with any social standing at all. Again, when I say this, I am referring strictly to the Moroccan social context. Morocco is a heavily patriarchal country and divorced women are treated as second- and third-class citizens. A woman in Morocco in the nineties (when the events in the novel take place) would not be able to divorce and continue on with any social graces, at all. It was in Farah's own self-interest, for both social survival and in order to save face, to realize both the strengths and weaknesses of the passionate attachments that bound her to subjection. She could free herself of this matrix of control in so far as economics and sexual desire were concerned: it is even amazing that she was willing to do that, as Northern Morocco (especially Tetouan) continues to be more socially conservative than some of the bigger cities to the south and on the coast (Rabat, Casablanca, Essaouira, and Marrakesh). Farah recognizes the Moroccan social climate in a Derridean (and Foucauldian) sense, where "there is no outside." That is, there is no completely escaping the matrix of the family network in Morocco: no matter what one

does or says, the neighbors find out, and it is considered a reflection on one's husband, on one's children, on one's brothers and father.

No decision can be made in regards to freedom without considering one's bloodlines. Having said that, what Farah has done in Bouissef Rekab's text is near revolutionary. It is no wonder that at one point she refers to her decision as, just as I mentioned earlier, her "revolución personal." Her biggest change here was that she acted totally in alignment with her thoughts. Her daughter Zohra will later have similar thoughts, but never will she act in line with them. Zohra will act out, but never in a fashion that is as effective as her mother's active decision to divorce Taieb. The important thing to recognize, however, is how the process and cycle of oppressive marriages and gender relationships are re-occurring through the generations. These events in the novel portray Bouissef Rekab's observation on the power of family to enact and to catalyze subjectivity formation. Or, as Butler would put it, "Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject" (13). The repetition of events entails a sort of sociopolitical teleology, one that Farah knows is entirely preventable, but that can become a pattern, if the oppression of bad marriages continues. By divorcing Taieb, Farah has obviously considered the idea that Butler elucidates when the scholar relates that

> If conditions of power are to persist, they must be reiterated; the subject is precisely the site of such reiteration, a repetition that is never merely mechanical. As the appearance of power shifts from the condition of the subject to its effects, the conditions of power

(prior and external) assume a present and futural form. But power
assumes this present character through a reversal of its direction,
one that performs a break with what has come before and
dissimulates as a self-inaugurating agency. (16)

Farah's quickness to act was an effectively active and aligned response to the understanding of the different subjections to which one is constantly subordinated, and that freedom is more progressive and imperfect than it is absolute. This is what Foucault meant when he observed, bitingly, that "Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"151). The idea is that freedom from subjection in any society is not teleological, and it does not automatically progress in laissez-faire fashion toward a generally better and improved situation. Subjection is woven into the fabric of society, and into its building blocks, which are the family units. Power and subjection often recycle themselves through the generations, creating repetitions of certain dynamics. This is what we see here with Zohra and her husband Tarik once they get married and move to Toledo: they are simply repeating the same problem, and experiencing a similar sort of suffering, that Farah and Taieb had gone through just a generation before.

In some ways, Bouissef Rekab's novel is a wonderful study in going against teleology, and his novel shows that subjection can take many complex forms, and how difficult it is to truly escape from its tutelage. For example, Zohra as a young girl benefits

from many aspects of being relatively free from the scope and depth of centralized patriarchal power. Her mother's salary and attitude toward marriage and love made it possible for the daughter to create a comfortable life as a doctor. Unlike many women, Zohra has been able to establish a professional name for herself and to succeed in a respectable career of her own choosing. Nevertheless, she is not entirely free, as she has married a man who no longer wishes to make love to her, simply continuing to consent to marriage because it falls in line with the status quo.

The ideology that burdens these two women is the societal pressure to be a good and model spouse, and the effectiveness of that ideology is witnessed by the degree to which both women have internalized this value system. The narrator actually describes the ideology in quite clear language:

> Farah recuerda que se enfrentaba a un reto bidimensional enorme. Obedecer a lo que sus sentimientos y su ardor diario le imponían – desmedidas ganas de entregarse a [her new boyfriend] Hafid-, por una parte; o permanecer fiel a lo que siempre supuso que era la verdadera moral, la mejor educación y el comportamiento cultural y religioso más adecuado socialmente – seguir siendo fiel a su viejo esposo a pesar de no quererlo-, por otra. (32)

Zohra's marriage does not turn out to work either: "Mi marido es de mi edad y a pesar de todo me tiene abandonada; ahora entiendo mucho mejor el sufrimiento de mi madre, que tuvo que soportar la indiferencia de un hombre, que por si fuera poco, era mucho mayor que ella…" (67). Zohra even feels the same duality, the "reto bidimensional enorme" that

her mother felt: specifically, even though the marriage is a complete disaster, she makes a promise to herself to stay in the marriage to Tarik no matter what, and to sacrifice her own desires. She begins to even compare herself to Farah: "¿Debo yo seguir así hasta la muerte? ¡Aunque no haga nada con Tarik, me aguantaré hasta el final!" (67). They have internalized that their lives are not worth enjoying, but that they must rather *put up* with it (" ¡me aguantaré hasta el final!"). It is here that the extent of their internalization of the patriarchal code and mindset becomes readily evident. They have begun to see their lives through the lives of others, and not for its inherent self-worth. But they are also cognizant of fighting against an anachronous and obsolete notion of self-negation, and of fighting against a certain form of genderized slavery.

As Nietzsche points out, there is an importance in fighting against the nobody-ing that is a part of what he calls "slave ethics", which "begins by saying *no* to an 'outside,' an 'other,' a non-self, and that *no* is its creative act" (*On The Genealogy of Morals* 171). This is what the two protagonists will have to do, and to an extent they do, in order to keep themselves from completely conforming to and disappearing into society. Bouissef Rekab explains his characters: " […] en el *Motín* [*del silencio*] precisamente, los personajes buscan en otros personajes la identidad que ellos han perdido en cierta manera" (Personal Interview 21 May 2014). His quote refers to the Moroccan identity that Zohra has lost in her acclimatization to Spanish culture over the years in Toledo, but it also refers to a change in her marriage, a union that has become lackluster over the years, whereas it used to be full of passion. The problems that Zohra's mother had are

affecting the daughter as well: she cannot escape these primal aspects of the passionate attachments.

Butler, in a later study called *Frames of War* (2009), writes that apprehension of one's life through the eyes of others is a way of internalizing a systemic violence, a structuralized idiom that inculcates people with the idea that they must tolerate living like second- or third-class citizens:

> The epistemological capacity to apprehend a life is partially dependent on that life being produced according to norms that qualify it as as a life or, indeed, as part of life. In this way, the normative production of ontology thus produces the epistemological problem of apprehending a life, and this in turn gives rise to the ethical problem of what it is to acknowledge or, indeed, to guard against injury and violence. (3)

The scholar is talking about physical violence, such as gunshots, bombs, domestic "disturbances," and other acts that leave actual visual scars, but she is also talking about the violence of poverty, of invisibility, of being ignored, and the psychological wound that this leaves. Far less visible, and in many instances not even perceivable, the first violence is only recognizing certain types of life as being dignified and recognizable life. In the case of the marriages of Zohra and Tarik, and of Farah and Taieb (before the divorce), the first violence coincides here with the psychological scars of silence, and of ignoring one another.

In Taieb's case, he only perceived his wants and desires first and he only considersed Farah's when (1) she gave him sex, and (2) when she brought up the topic of divorce. Suddenly, and at these moments only, he senses and feels her presence: but outside of these contexts, she is nothing. As we can see from some of the excerpts earlier cited, Tarik doesn't even touch Zohra, and it is as if she doesn't even exist. Real, emotionally sensitive human conversation is what is lacking: this is due to the fact that Taieb sees Farah as not quite equal to men. This perspective later manifests itself in Zohra's marriage, as well. At one point, not expecting to have children (and financially unprepared), Tarik blames Zohra for getting pregnant. Yet he fails to take into account her point of view as an equal. As Zohra reflects on this particular point, "Para colmo, y ya para terminar con la paciencia de Tarik, volví a quedar en estado y comenzó la espera de la llegada de Fuad. Tarik me culpaba a mí por quedarme encinta… Que por qué no tomaba precauciones… ¿Y por qué no las tomaba él?" (29). Both Zohra and Farah have to put up with men who have been shaped by a society that plays heavily in favor of male lineage.

This situation of women being seen as inferior subjects is symbolically destroyed when the family reunites at Taieb's burial – passionate attachments to an old and outdated order are both reaffirmed and torn up when Farah takes charge of organizing the funeral, and of taking care of the future living arrangements for her daughter Zohra. By taking charge of getting the family together for Taieb's burial, it is true that Farah tacitly makes the patriarch a center of a family togetherness, and therefore unwittingly makes a nod toward respecting old Morocco's symbolic order. The northern Moroccan city of

Tetouan becomes a destination where all paths meet, and where the multiplicity that critic Jean-Joseph Goux spoke of returns to its Oneness, to the male source of family and ideas, the life-giving force of *spermatika logoi* ("The Phallus: Masculine Identity" 48-49). It is at the father's deathbed that the family divided against itself due to migration, bitterness, and misunderstandings, becomes reunited in such a fashion that the grandchildren, nephews, and cousins all want to come around and visit one other.

But it is an ambiguous relationship to patriarchy that unfolds at the funeral. In many ways, the reunion is empowering. As Michael Dillon opines, "In sitting down together […] the contestants consummate a "communion" with their own as well as each other's being there in a meeting that becomes a meeting of strangers in acknowledgement of their common estrangement as human beings (126)." They are emboldened, upon meeting each other, to cross borders and to get to know the other side. If, as Bill Ashcroft et al. have affirmed, postcolonial subjectivities are returning back to the empire, then Bouissef Rekab's text is indeed, an example of where "the empire writes back."[62] In the migratory sense, the entire Serifi family, from both Morocco and Spain, is reuniting at Taieb's house in Tetouan. The city effectively becomes a transnational border for the entire family, and one that entirely entrusts itself to Farah's authority.

The autonomy that Farah has, although now married to Hafid, is due to the fact that she didn't deliberate too much about what she wanted. According to Bouissef Rekab:

[62] See Bill Ashcroft, et al. (2003), who writes on the migrants who travel back to the colonizing countries that until just after WWII invaded their land and took away their resources for financial benefit. They write that one finds in nearly all postcolonial literature, of which Bouissef's oeuvre would be one example of many, there is a preoccupation to explore and go "[b]eyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity" (9).

> Cuando [Taieb] muere, libera en cierto modo la elección que ha tenido Farah. La elección que ha tenido…estaba un poco abrumada, molesta por la presencia en el mundo de ese señor. Cuando hay la desaparición, que le duele, ella se siente liberada, porque por si "ya no tengo esa molestia interior de que yo he engañado a este hombre, le he dejado solo," ya lo ha dejado, ya no está, ya no existe…entonces ese peso se le quita de encima a esa mujer […] siendo una buena mujer, yo la considero uno de los mejores personajes…no porque se haya ido con otro señor, sino porque ella tiene principios, los ha respetado, y cuando se ha visto enganchada del amor, pues lo ha dicho a su marido que tenía que ir y separarse para no seguir en el camino del engaño. (Personal Interview 21 May 2014)

Zohra on the other hand, seems content to stay in her marriage, even if she is not happy. It seems that it has been for her enough to simply identify her problem and then to express it, through an epistolary confession, to first Taieb and then to Farah herself. For Zohra, actions matter less than intentions and thoughts. For her it is enough to have entertained the thought, because that alone gives her the right to stay married to her husband. She can be satisfied, glum but smug, that she is a "good" wife. In fact, it is because she has persevered in the face of negative thoughts, precisely, that she is so good! This is the perverse thinking that drives her to live in opposition to her thoughts. For her mother though, this is not enough: the only answer is to break with the neglectful

husband. One could argue that Farah is more westernized in her desire to divorce from Taieb, but no one could deny that it is Zohra who becomes, through her long cultural formation in Toledo, much more westernized.

It would be a Eurocentric assumption to guess that divorce didn't exist in North Africa at the time of the novel's setting. It is important to stress the fact that Farah did not even bother checking with family nor with others about divorcing: she simply trusted her own judgement and followed suit. She quietly rebelled, whereas her daughter entertains rebelling against the institution of marriage but by writing out her confession, she thwarts her own capacity and willingness to divorce Tarik. It is because she confessed, and it is the extra energy that she put into confession, that she exercised a sort of Aristotelian *catharsis*, exorcising her own desires and potential for acting. In Zohra's case, she becomes intoxicated by the knowledge that she knows she is not happy and that she is doing something about it by writing her father and confessing it.

As far as practical consequences go, however, Zohra's act is an intellectual act of masturbation, a practice that feels as though she is doing something and provides her with the necessary self-satisfaction that she is getting something done that will help her. It is all, however, an illusion; the exercise of writing the confession letter enacts a false catharsis (or real perhaps, depending on one's idea of what catharsis actually leads to) so that Zohra can afford to think subversively but in concrete daily action do actually nothing about her situation. Confession for Zohra leads to the ecstasy of catharsis and a safe sort of rebellion from within that is really just a fortification of the status quo garbed up as serious action. This sort of action is in subtle but great contrast to her mother, who

decided that marriage to a heavy-set old man was not for her and therefore left him for a much better partner. Of the two individuals' actions, the latter without a confession, Farah has truly ruptured with, albeit selectively, certain passionate attachments. Zohra understood her passionate attachments finally, but she had internalized them so much that she could never feel comfortable enough to fully subvert the social convention that bound her and Tarik together.

The fact that Farah delt with her source of subjection directly and without any circumvention means that there is very little, if nothing, for her to sublimate in her life. She is living life in alignment with her personal beliefs and ideals, which in many ways does not contradict the idea of family and socialization that she was raised with – itself a passionate attachment that she had internalized but that does not bother her enough to get her to question it and to divorce herself from it. Zohra's biggest challenge, however, will be to overcome the unwanted reality that will haunt her because she never satisfactorily dealt with her unhappy relationship with Tarik: she *will* sublimate her feelings and dissatisfactions, and she will do so by taking up an activity that will consume so much of her energies that she no longer has to live so disturbed by the anomaly that is her romantic life. How does Zohra manage to forget her relationship issues? By dedicating herself with all of her passion and desire into the social work in Toledo standing up and defending migrants' human rights in Spain. Zohra becomes an activist, both because of a genuine interest (perhaps some of it feigned) and in order to dissipate the sad and negative energy emanating from her lonesome relationship. By dedicating herself to one activity she no longer has to think about how her life is not aligned with her thoughts,

which is a sort of violence that she inflicts on herself, but that is simultaneously easy to do. She has opted to do nothing about her marriage. To hide the horror at this inactivity, she keeps herself busy with her social activism.

Butler has noted that "The psychoanalytic discourse that would describe and pathologize repressed desire ends up producing a discursive incitement to desire: impulse is continually fabricated as a site of confession and, hence, potential control, but this fabrication exceeds the regulatory aims by which it is generated" (59). The powerful urge to exceed rules and regulations and to transgress them is born of the sublimated energy that is outraged by a passionless marriage. Instead of directing her anger at the correct subject, her husband (I am not talking about domestic violence, but rather to direct, humane, and effective interpersonal communication), Zohra rages against an entire symbolic power, the Spanish authorities and their treatment of migrants. Her decision to rebel against Spanish practices of racism and xenophobia are not misguided, but they are far from being apurely noble aspirations in their motivations. In some sense, her motives for questioning Spanish injustices against migrant subjectivities is less about expanding human rights and assuring the just treatment of other human lives, and sometimes more about distracting herself from the self that is still subject to the passionate attachments of her family and its respective values and expectations. There is safety in her decision to challenge authority. As a sort of proverbial steam valve, the activism in favor of African migrants allows her to not rock the boat in her own personal affairs. In a very twisted sense, the personal is the political, just not in an intended and aligned fashion: the activism is a ruse for protecting her family identity from itself, a mask that keeps her

marriage alive as a credible performance. One could even consider it as not just a mask but a veil, a thinly-veiled cover activity that disguises and mutes her own private lost battles. Had she not confessed there is a high possibility that her catharsis would have come by actually divorcing Tarik, and she could unveil a far happier and more balanced subjectivity than the one that is currently bound to her own self-impositions. Instead she stands with her hands tied together, swearing that if she were not bound, she would attack and fight the good fight. Her conditions are safely infelicitous.

What binds Zohra is her dependence on Tarik, and on her ego, that is conditioned by her family expectations. She is her own dictator, but her self-enslaving thoughts are bound by the idea that she must keep up appearances, because, according to her logic, keeping the family together is the only way to raise a healthy and sane family. It is more than possible that Bouissef Rekab is portraying a woman who is obsessed with her own childhood anger at a marriage that could have been better- and that marriage, in question, was her parents'. By holding her own marriage together, Zohra is proving to herself, although in a somewhat futile fashion, that good families can and do stay together. She is deceiving herself, and it almost makes her feel better about her lie to have this made-up alibi. It makes her feel superior to her mother, whom she considers to be an abject being. Perhaps keeping her family together under a forced idea of a "happy family" is precisely the control she needs to feel over her life as opposed to the unpredictability of her parents' marriage. Zohra is, by conforming to society's expectation of a wife's role in matrimony, rebelling against the pain of having grown up in a broken home, but in the process making herself even unhappier, and further enmeshing herself in a

heteronormative matrix that diminishes her subjectivity and, what is further, it is diminishing her ability to criticize her social status in millennial Morocco.

Butler says something similar about sublimation and its effects to upholding dominant norms, and she poses it as a question:

> If the body is subordinated and to some extent destroyed as the dissociated self emerges, and if that emergence might be read as the sublimation of the body and the self be read as the body's ghostly form, then is there some part of the body which is not preserved in sublimation, some part of the body which remains unsublimated? (92)

Bouissef Rekab's answer to this question, vis-à-vis his novel, is a resounding *yes.* But the body that is sublimated is the singular, subjective body, encapsulating one's private feelings. The individual body is thus subordinated to the social body, the latter deemed the former's superior, and so yes, the greater social body as a whole has not been sublimated, but the individual one has. However, since in any society individual bodies can change social bodies, and since we have established that individual bodies are to a certain extent formed and informed by the social body, the social body is unhealthily sublimated by an individual body that refuses to challenge norms that have fossilized the entire group and community as a whole over centuries and even over millennia.

The idea of the West being fascinated with the veil here comes back in this portion of the chapter. I have already stated that the West is fascinated with the veil because it opposes, in conceptualization, the cultural appreciation in Christian-majority

countries for the confession. If what Foucault argued is true, that "Western man has become a confessing animal," then Zohra's decision to confess has not been the appropriate way, in Moroccan society, to free herself. Instead, she could have attained more freedom had she simply kept her mouth shut and gone about fearlessly acting on her desires. By manifesting her identity as simply revolving around the unhappiness of her relationship to her husband, she alienated herself from her own passionate attachments, and created the conditions by which lying to oneself became preferable to acting. As Foucault would have it, her social identity as a wife became her. Zohra's mother, however, veiled her feelings until they finally welled up and they came out at an appropriate time, and she effectively communicated her desire to break ties with Taieb.

In this way, both women veiled and unveiled themselves. But it was Zohra who unveiled herself in the Western fashion, confessing her unhappy identity as wife to her father. Confession in Morocco is not socially acceptable. Identity in Morocco is not a label, it is not something that, by itself determines that a person is exclusively a wife, is exclusively a homosexual, is exclusively Arab, is exclusively a cook, or any one-dimensional identitarian category. A person cannot be understood solely by the magistrates and by the scientific doctors, where labels, archives, and categorizations based on confession play "a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rights" (*The History of Sexuality* 59). As such, Zohra's decision to confess allows her to feel exhausted by her identity as spouse, but not angry. This leaves her open to a sociopolitical issue where, as Butler points out, the general public can say with relief,

"Ah yes, so you are that, and only that" (93). It allows for society to read her as a woman who only cares about one thing, her relationship to her marriage, and as a result she becomes enslaved to only one matter. By veiling her concerns until the final moment, when she finally did disrobe, Farah did the opposite: she shut one door and was able to move on to other more pressing affairs, such as raising her daughter appropriately, earning a better income, and dating a desirable and age-appropriate man.

By confessing I am referring to the practice, in the West, of openly acknowledging one's thoughts and activities to an empirical audience, be that of one other person or an entire group. This is the confession that Zohra carried out, and it mitigated her capacities for fighting against the passionate attachments of an idealized and romanticized heteronormative marriage.

4.2 The Burial of the Patriarchy and the Burial of *Passionate Attachments*

The burial of Taieb in Tetouan is the result of Farah's decision to, for many years, veil her unhappiness in her marriage. Choosing to remain quiet made her more likely to finally *snap*, as it were, and break up legally with her significant other. The fact that his burial signifies the ushering in of a more liberated era for women, and therefore for the Moroccan people in general, creates a tension whereby Zohra's decision to confess keeps her subjugated to her husband, even though she is in the supposedly more "liberated" Spain, where women have various rights that are not enjoyed in Morocco. The daughter is unable to bury her passionate attachment to a normative (and outdated) idea of

marriage, where women put up with all sorts of pain so that the matrimony can run its inevitable, predetermined course.

Farah's earlier assertion that she wants to leave the house that she and Taieb live in ("Quiero la libertad… Quiero salir de esta casa") speaks to the macro-domestic meaning of house that Taieb's death alludes to metaphorically. If Taieb's death is a metaphor for Hassan II's own passing, and the subsequent arrival of Mohamed VI onto the national scene (we will recall that Taieb's fictional character passes away in the summer of 1999, coinciding perfectly with Hassan II's passing), then Farah's desire to "salir de esta casa" is a discursive allusion to a much greater house, which would be traditional Morocco.[63] That is, Farah, wanted to leave the traditional house of Morocco and its vestigial (and sometimes anachronous and obsolete) cultural practices, and enter another one, a habitus where she felt accepted and where she felt that women, as a whole, would have more control over their lives. Taieb's burial is the social occasion upon which Farah herself will be able to symbolically bury social injustices that limit women's control to determine what they want for themselves and for their own bodies. It is a social occasion marked by a social action in which Farah can bury patriarchy that has codified its way into the country's lawbooks. For example, it is quite common for Moroccan family descendants to read the father's will, just as it is in many countries. However, the

[63] Farah's desire to exit a patriarchal household space shows, along with El Hachmi's *El último patriarca* (mentioned in a previous footnote), the will and the active engagement to disengage with male-dominated societies and families. The female protagonist in El Hachmi's novel, however, completely breaks with her passionate attachments by allowing her uncle to sodomize her in a remarkable scene that purposely references Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (but with olive oil instead of butter), thus enabling a permanent rupture with her dictatorial father.

family statutes, as the law stipulates them, dictate that the inheritors of family property be passed down to the male offspring, unless otherwise stated.

For example, inheritance has been practiced in ways that have been detrimental to Moroccan women for decades, if not centuries. A 2014 *New York Times* article ("Gender Inequality in Morocco Continues") pointed out that "Many families disintegrate after the death of the father, and sometimes survivors lose their homes" (n.p.). According to the same article, the law provides that property should go to whomever the father names as inheritor. For this reason it is normally the case that men in the family are the social inheritors of property. However, in Bouissef Rekab's novel, Farah is proactive about what will happen to Taieb's property. She made sure that Taieb put the family houses in Tetouan in Zohra's name, so that she would inherit the Serifi family house. Metaphorically, this gesture suggests that Morocco is changing hands, from a male-dominated society to one in which both genders are equal, and thus where women also have control and a say over what happens in the nation, or the "big" house. The same *New York Times* article mentioned early states that, just like in *Silencio*, "Many Moroccans […] have discovered ways to work around the law, registering their properties in the name of their daughters, if they do not have a son, to guarantee that the inheritance stays within the nuclear family." This social reality, tied to Moroccan law and custom, is precisely what Farah was contending with in her marriage with Taieb. At one point she points out that "Desde hacia tiempo no había vuelto a hablar de poner las dos casas a nombre de Zohra; cuando no había dinero me opuse porque eso era carísimo, pero si me lo hubiera repetido en los tiempos de bonanza, habría aceptado encantada… Así

evitaría que Zohra y yo tuviéramos enfrentamientos y pleitos con sus hermanos Mojtar y Abdelah por la herencia" (33). The contention between the matriarchal side and the patriarchal sides of the family, as well as the debate over whether the property should be in female or in male hands, is obviously a latent preoccupation. It is also evident that Farah had, from time to time, discussed the issue of Zohra's inheritance with her husband. So she used as much agency as possible in her situation to negotiate a deal for her daughter.

Part of Farah's motivation in settling a deal for her daughter is so that her daughter feels like she has a voice in certain affairs. This voice is something that Farah never felt that she had in her relationship to her ex-husband: "Su marido, un hombre bueno con muchos fallos, que le fue impuesto por la familia –cuando los adules me preguntaron si quería casarme con ese individuo, no respondí, y claro, el que calla otorga; en cierta medida fui culpable de aquella situación" (33). What Farah realizes are that actions are louder than words, and her having walked away from the marriage supports this idea. The fact that she was able to negotiate the terms of Zohra's inheritance is also proof that she believes that words are idle and that actions really define a person's true ideals. She admits to having talked about the issue to Taieb, but it sounds like she only spoke to him on select occasions ("Desde hacía tiempo no había vuelto a hablar…"). She picked her battles, and did not waste time talking about frivolities. The fact that the author of this investigation perceives this as positive could betray his own gender bias, but it appears that Farah's great strength is that she is more about acting then she is about

over-deliberating (including talking), and Zohra seems to be quite the opposite, and her weakness appears to be that she overthinks her life.

These key differences between Zohra and Farah could also be a clue as to how the novel's title is pertinent. If one is talking about "el motín del silencio," one is talking about how, paradoxically, silence can be another form of rebellion, and can sometimes lead to more authentic subversion of oppressive societal norms. Effectively, Farah's strategy for handling discussion is what has, in the end, obtained results. After all, in his will at the burial, Taieb declares in writing that he wants to give his houses to his daughter. Taieb's brother Mojtar explains: "Ahora quiero enseñaros los documentos de propiedad para que los notarios aquí presentes, tomen nota y los pongan a nombre de mi sobrina Zohra. Más tarde que ella se encargue de registrarlo todo a su nombre…" (119). This declaration of property establishes the Serifi household as a transnational space whereby family members from both sides of the Mediterranean, from Toledo and from Tetouan, can come together and reunite. By having a house under her name, Zohra's family will always have a place to stay. In this sense, a woman will serve as the family's hub and unifying center.

Neither does it just end there. It is also the case that the family members there present at Taieb's burial find themselves networking and meeting members of the Peninsular Serifis for the first time ever. It is established that some of them will come up from Morocco to stay for a while in Spain. One of them (Badía) even comes to the decision that they will study and work in order to be able to be eligible to be a university student in Spain. At the same time, those in the Serifi family who wish to come south to

Morocco declare their intentions to learn more about their cultural heritage in North Africa. The house that will become Zohra's creates the reunion necessary so that bilateral relations, as well as transnational movement, becomes possible and desirable between the two countries.

This more open and legal form of migration has a complex effect on Zohra, now grown up and accustomed to life in Toledo. Reconnecting with her family, and allowing family members to come up from Morocco to visit up in Spain, has made her more sensitive to the politics of migration between the two countries. What is fascinating is how the locus of Taieb's burial, and the social networking there at the house, created a new sort of social consciousness in the family, especially on the Spanish side of the border. By turning over the Serifi family house to Zohra, it becomes possible to trace the connection between voice, protest, burial, transnational movement and migration. In this context, I read the house as being a metaphor for being rooted and having a legally-justified, "above-the-table" and interpellated existence in Morocco. The house is also a symbolic gesture of the dignified treatment the Serifi family will have when it migrates to visit Zohra and her Penninsular family in Toledo. Everything is, or has become, dignified, legal, and the complete opposite of all the insidious connotations that the word "clandestine" could have. The negative social significance of the coined phrase "clandestine migrants" is here occluded from the situation. Zohra's inherited house in Tetouan is a semantic signifier of the welcoming the Serifi family will now have in both countries, for they will be "at home" as it were in either space, without fear of reprisal from the Spanish authorities.

Unlike the migrants who migrate to Spain by desperately paying their way to *la red mafiosa*[64] or to the *pateristas*,[65] Zohra and Farah's family has a safe and secured spot on either side of the Mare Nostrum. This draws attention once again to the long-lasting effects of Farah's ability to negotiate the inheritance with Taieb. As Zohra returns to Spain, she begins giving night classes to migrants so that they can become socially integrated residents, and even perhaps citizens, in Europe. But as even she herself privately *confesses* (my emphasis) to the reader, "En cuanto a mí, había comenzado mis clases de árabe para los inmigrantes y cada vez me sentía mejor realizada como mujer y como persona" (159). At the same time, she notes that her husband Tarik is constantly working and always with another certain male coworker, that seems to be Tarik's potential lover:

> Tarik seguía con sus turnos de mañana o de tarde en su trabajo; en varias ocasiones tuvo que hacer el viaje a Marruecos con trabajadores marroquíes que alquilaban los servicios de su compañía… y en todas las ocasiones le acompañaba el mismo conductor: Ignacio. ¿Por qué al pensar en este hombre, lo relaciono con Riduan? Seguía siendo amable y cortés, pero yo quería tener a mi lado a un hombre, no a un "hermano"… (162)

It becomes more than evident as to why Zohra is dedicating herself with so much piety to the teaching of her Moroccan migrant students at the center where she imparts classes. She is sublimating her loneliness by using all her worries and energy to revolve around

[64] Mafia network.
[65] Boat people.

her social work and her activism. It is questionable whether or not she dedicates herself to the cause of teaching for sincere reasons, that is, out of a pure altruism. The more likely case is that she is trying to distract herself from an emotional spot where she is hurting and feels emotional pain.

By confessing her sublimation of her energies, the narrative opens up a debate as to what is more effective, concrete action within the family to obtain benefits for those to whom one is close, or to do a gentle, kid-glove activism in Spain whereby one teaches Arab civilization and Arab language classes to people who would probably benefit more by learning about Spanish language and culture, so that they could better and more realistically negotiate their lives in contemporary Iberian society. Zohra herself even admits this in a conversation she has with another character in the novel:

> Me encantaría poder ayudar a mis hermanos, que han conseguido llegar hasta aquí [Spain] y tienen la posibilidad de aprender algo; de conocer su cultura y su civilización. Sería una alegría poderlos ver entrando en el mundo de la escritura… Seguramente serán como niños cuando descubren los sentidos de las letras y las empiezan a combinar para nombrar las cosas…. Es triste que puedan empezar a aprender estas cosas fuera de su país, pero nunca es tarde si se alcanza el bienestar… (158)

The effectiveness of Zohra's activism is quite dubious. It is worth asking if her teaching for the non-governmental organization for which she works is helping the migrants at all in Spain. This doubt could lead, of course, to a heated debate in the case of bilingual

education, except it does not even seem even to be about bilingual pedagogy alone. Instead, according to the text, Zohra seems to be teaching only Arabic to migrants who are recently arrived to the Peninsula. It seems like a sort of useless activism; that is, more about keeping one busy than about actually helping the migrants place themselves and become socially acclimated to Spain. This is not to strengthen the argument for assimilation that intellectuals such as Miguel Azurmendi (and Fernando Ortiz) have pointed out, as I have argued earlier on in this study. The problematization of Zohra's "activism" extends to critiquing the idea of going too far outside of oneself to help others. Why go so far to help others when the results could be almost nil? Granted, one could say that there are no concrete results for the Serifi family, as no one knows the family's future and how the continued movement between two countries will play out for the Serifi clan. However, it appears that Bouissef Rekab is subtly insinuating that it is better to help one's own from a familial perspective than to blindly help those outside of one's nuclear family unit. Following this logic, one could say that Zohra is stretching herself too thin and going beyond the necessary to help, and is therefore inadvertently hurting her ethnic community, or her Arab "hermanos," as she puts it.

The domestic imagery of the Serifi house in Tetouan seems to faithfully represent the author's take on effective activism within the migrant Moroccan community. At the end of the novel there are scenes in Madrid where the text takes on a sort of didactic social-conscious approach for a Spanish readership that presumably is ignorant of the affairs and injustices occurring in the Mediterranean. For example, some of the characters begin to offer slightly overdone explanations for the situation in Spain, explanations

which seem to be like hitting the reading public over the head in order to convey some essential social Message with a capital 'M.' A few examples of this didactic posturing: "[…] cuando hables del fenómeno, no lo centres únicamente en Marruecos… No olvides que Argelia también tiene este problema… Sin mencionar a Túnez y Libia, que esos prefieren, en su mayoría, hacer la travesía hacia Italia…" (152).

Then there are the declarative social statements, as if the message were not clear enough: "¿Sabes que la mujer inmigrante, presente en España, es la más numerosa y necesita que la ayudemos a salir del callejón en el que la meten los mafiosos?" (148). Then there is the over-arching idea, spelled out in explicit terms, speaking about the plight of the undocumented migrants, in a protest that some of the characters attend in Spain's capital city:

> A nosotros incumbe transmitir sus ansiedades a toda la sociedad occidental… Es nuestra obligación porque nuestros anteriores gobernantes, los colonizadores, les han robado sus riquezas y les han dejado solos, sumidos en la ignorancia, en la nada, a su suerte. El objetivo principal de nuestra marcha del domingo es precisamente sensibilizar a los responsables marroquíes y españoles para que solucionen conjuntamente este dramático fenómeno… (146)

Bouissef Rekab openly acknowledges this didactic aspect of the text, mentioning that part of the problem is that Spaniards are not paying attention to the reality:

> […] los datos que estoy dando son precisamente para que tú sepas, el lector, que hay muchos problemas que todavía no se saben. A ver quién es el valiente que te dice que ha muerto un millón de emigrantes en el Estrecho, o han muerto cien mil […]
>
> Question (Interlocutor): ¿Por qué sientes que hay que ser tan explícito con los datos sobre la tragedia de la inmigración? ¿Es que los españoles no prestan atención?
>
> No se la prestan. Y si la prestan, nadie quiere darse cuenta. La prensa española, por ejemplo, habla de cómo ha habido un hundimiento de una barca. Se cree que tenía veinte personas. ¿Cómo los entierran? Sin nombre, en una lápida sin nombre. Yo lo he visto. He ido a un cementerio cristiano en Algeciras, y he visto tumbas sin nombre. (Personal Interview 21 May 2014)

It becomes evident that a central idea is emphasized in *Silencio*, where economically poor migrants enter new and foreign countries without any sort of certainties, and upon arriving their lives are still in danger in what is allegedly one of the geographic safe-havens of the world, the European subcontinent. In a world where the Western authorities, and even most national authorities in general, use massive surveillance technology in order to impose a Bentham-like panopticon of control over society, one must respond with an effective plan of documentation, archival, and recordkeeping. Some of this goes back to Foucault's *Discipline & Punish*, but much of it is discussed in his *The History of Sexuality* as well. Since the border controls are so tight and controlled in their

organization, and because the surveillance is so complete and totalizing, the best way to combat this spying eye is to fight it by keeping the family safe and together.

By Western standards, and particularly in the U.S., this sort of rings of the right-wing Republican "family values" discourse espoused by anti-immigrant xenophobes and luminaries such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell (and a good many others, Glenn Beck and Ann Coulter among them, in the twenty-first century). Yet by Moroccan standards, Farah's small-scale activism, enacting a sort of feminist model for her daughter to emulate, secures a spot for the family in a way that keeps the Serifis safe from the Spanish authorities and all their technological tools and forms of interrogation, inquiry and book-keeping. Instead of just plainly confessing as Zohra does about her personal life, Farah first takes her family into account, and then secures a way to make confession safe, in the form of her family members revealing themselves through their legal and legally-recognized documentation. Now when the family relatives cross the Mediterranean, the fact that there is literally a "safe" house on both sides of the sea creates a safe condition for the disclosure of transnational movement. The subversiveness on Farah's part is that she has created the conditions so that all members of the family can "confess" their reasons for crossing to the other side in such a manner that the police, the authorities, the university, future employers and all involved will feel comfortable authorizing "foreign" entry into the country. She has created the conditions by which both the police and the migrants in question will feel comfortable moving in two different directions, in any particular way that they please.

The fact that the Serifis now have a legitimate place to stay on both sides of the border creates the conditions for not remaining silent, and to confess their status and also their own complaints or problems. In many situations, a lot of migrants who have no documents will not disclose (a form of confessing) legal problems, or health problems, because it makes them vulnerable to deportation, once the authorities become aware of their illegal status in the Peninsula. By sticking to purely the domestic realm of the nuclear family, Farah has been able to more effectively help those who form a part of the social group to whom she has "passionate attachments." She procures help for those who related immediately to her, and is able to create change where she actually has control over the situation. Farah does not over-extend herself. She does the best she can to help her family and that is it. Some may call this nepotism, but one should consider that Farah is not the King of Morocco nor is she the *Presidente del gobierno español.* In an ideal world, she would have a sort of absolute say in helping all migrants, but since she is a subject of Moroccan rule she can only create change within a certain social sphere, and very often only within the law. She is subjected to the laws and patriarchal norms of both Spain and Morocco, but even so Farah has been able to procure a situation whereby her family will never need to be quiet, or silent, even if many times she had to be. Does her activism for her family and relative silence mean that she defers her thoughts and needs to only future generations, a trope that is common in patriarchal narratives of Spanish and Moroccan family structures? Perhaps. But concretely it is demonstrable that her sacrifices will have positive effects for the family toward which she has, through her daughter Zohra, been loyal. By choosing her passionate attachments and by keeping on good terms

with Taieb's brothers, Farah has single-handedly been able to bury any worries about inter-familial transnational movement.

By burying her potential confession about marriage for so long, Farah was able to keep her passionate attachments to her family alive and well. True, she was never truly in love with Taieb. Her marriage was a huge sacrifice, and she sacrificed her own individual happiness for the future happiness of her family. Many would confuse her lack of concern for her individual happiness as a serious lack of individual thought, when the truth is that she thought very heavily about her marriage (she deliberates quite a bit about the pros and cons of divorce before leaving Taieb for Hafid). She was indeed thinking for herself, but it was in terms of considering what was best for the future and for her family-always, that is, with her most dear of passionate attachments in mind. Besides, Farah does end up finding an ideal man, and she gets a job promotion that makes her feel good about herself. Some may see this as problematic, and perhaps it is, but her quiet tenacity subverts the loud complaints of her daughter. By insinuating and plotting along the way during her entire marriage, she is like a prisoner in a jail cell who spends years deliberately planning an escape and a destination once on "the outside." But she never goes too far outside, because Farah must keep in mind the social binds and mores of Morocco, that admittedly frown upon female movement and autonomy outside of the family milieu.

In order to be free as a Moroccan woman, Farah must always confer with her family role, her family identity, and how her independent actions will affect those around her. Her thought process certainly has its validity: after all, even in the individualist West,

how acceptable would it be for parents to neglect their own family's future? Farah is an independent woman, but it would be more important and more appropriate to say that she is an independent woman with a family, a social condition that dictates that she must be careful about her choices and she must weigh them carefully. Anything else, after all, would imply carelessness on her part. This social consideration is even more heightened when considered in the corporatism that is common in Moroccan social and family culture. Her lack of confession allows the conditions so that future generations *can* confess themselves when the Western authorities come after the Serifi migrants with questions, interrogations, forms, records, books, and stamps. As Balibar (2004) would put it, Farah has attempted "to *democratize the institution of the border*, that is, to put it at the service of men and submit it to their collective control, make it an object of their 'sovereignty,' rather than allowing it to subject them to powers over which they have no control" (108). The paradox of staying silent so that others can confess freely puts her "motín de silencio" at an advantage to Zohra's much more vocal, and arguably useless, social consciousness, both in regards to her marriage and in her sublimation of energy to teach Arab language to recent incoming migrants.

The line is drawn then, in the distinct difference, as well as the advantage that one has, in helping one's immediate family over the entirety of North Africa. By sticking to helping those that fit in one's house, and I am referring to the actual structure of a Moroccan household, although nodding to the figurative notion of one's nuclear family, one can actually have much more positive impact than in trying to save an entire nation of Moroccans, or what is even harder yet, all of the Maghreb, or on an even grander

scale, *all* African migrants who migrate to Europe. Farah's approach is much simpler in scope and in philosophy- "save those that you can." By making a dent where it is possible, one probably would not win Nobel Peace prizes or even get coverage from the press, but then of course that is not what any of this should be about, anyway. There are deeper concerns to be mindful of here- including human lives, human dignity, and the ability of families to stick together. By appealing to the latter concern, that of assuring that the family stay together, Farah is able to effect a more complete change with regard to her goals: by aiming to save most of her family, she is likely to be able to do just that. In sharp contrast, Zohra's goal for her social activism is so large-scale that it is hard to tell how many people she will actually, truly, be able to help. Of course part of the reason she is helping is because it helps her repress her frustration and feeling alone in a marriage.

The desire to confess, the desire to reveal one's pain and frustration is a desire to be subordinated in order to feel more in control: it is slightly masochistic, as it subjects the speaker to unpredictable criticism and reactions. But it is also a way to reassert control over one's condition when one is uncomfortable and feeling emotionally disoriented, as Zohra would be by her husband's inattentiveness and emotional distance. All it indicates is that Zohra acts out in her well-intentioned activism because due to the tension that she keeps buried from the surface about her ever-weakening marriage to Tarik. As a consequence of burying her frustrations, she only learns to complain about them, without ever intending to break up the union. Her reluctance to completely bury a directly hurtful aspect of patriarchy leads her to focus her energies in any way possible on

other matters, regardless of whether or not they are actually useful or helpful to the target populations that she is working with.

Her mother, however, is more effective in moving on with her life. Her style is much more succinct: she does not bury her feelings, she deals with them. But she does, to an extent, bury Taieb. She of course did not kill him- he died of natural causes. Besides, she truly cared about him and never would have hurt anybody. But she did bury the influence he had on her, by separating from him and leaving him to his house while she moved in with Hafid. Taieb is the only passionate attachment from whom Farah selectively removed herself. When one reads Butler's observations on passionate attachments, it appears as if it is somewhat negative that no one can cut themselves off entirely. But the "entierro" of the Serifi family patriarch allows for a new conceptualization of family, which in the future will mean different passionate attachments, but will leave Farah and her family better off than before.

To conclude this chapter, Farah's ideas bring to mind two particular ideas from an actual person who was just as idealist and pragmatic as the protagonist in the novel: Mohandas K. Gandhi. The leader of the Indian independence movement proved in his actions that he was was willing to have faith in a concept of struggle known as *satyagraha*, roughly translated as truth in living, or literally as "firmness in truth." The non-violent peace leader described its social meaning and its relationship to his ideas for peaceful decolonization:

> In Gujarati also we used the English phrase 'passive resistance' to describe it. When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term

> ‘passive resistance’ was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterized by hatred, and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, […] It was clear that a new word must be coined by the Indians to designate their struggle. (*My Experiments with Truth* 318)

Eknath Easwaran notes that Gandhi was an advocate of implementing *satyagraha* in the home, which Gandhi called “domestic” or “family satyagraha” (*Gandhi the Man* 184). The Blue Mountain meditation scholar described it as being a philosophy that could establish love and equilibrium in the home, amongst one’s spouse and children:

> Family satyagraha is founded, like all satyagraha, on this delicate balance of patience and determination, which, when rightly practiced, can become a cornerstone for deep personal relations between men and women […] few homes today seem able to withstand even the predictable tensions of married life, so that estrangement and alienation have become common ingredients in the modern household. At this low ebb in family living, Gandhi’s way rings especially true: forgive, forbear, support the other person always, and when it becomes necessary to resist, do so lovingly and without rancor. (185)

I include it here because so many think that to “resist lovingly” and to “forbear,” and even to “forgive” are normally thought of as solely female traits. Their definitions essentialize an important perspective at home that can have positive and even

revolutionary implications for the world. Gandhi implemented them and modeled that men, and not only women, are capable of having the strength in such actions. What is unfortunate about practicing equilibrium is that, as Gandhi noticed, in the West we equate it with weakness, when actually it is just the opposite.

The strategy (not an entirely sufficient categorical term, since the idea is to show the way through love and independent thought) of creating a viable future for one's family requires both a search for truth in the form of honest living and in a willingness to suffer. Critics will no doubt disparage the masochistic undertones of this approach to family relations, as Farah suffered through a relationship where she felt no desire for her spouse. Bouissef Rekab has in part explained his use of strong female characters in *Silencio*:

> En mi obra se nota, el personaje principal mío siempre es mujer. No es por machismo, ni por feminismo, sino por la igualdad. La igualdad sexual yo la creo, la considero…entonces, muchísima gente me dice que por qué siempre el principal personaje es femenino. Lo hago sin darme cuenta. Es una cosa que sale así. Es lo que plasmo, es lo que hay en mi mente. (Personal Interview 21 May 2014)

Both Farah and her Zohra seemed to go through similar situations with their first marriages. Additionally, both buried their feelings for a very long time. But herein was the difference in unburying their feelings: Farah used their repression and the force with which she had buried those feelings to also summon them, and when doing so, instantly

divorced her Taieb. Zohra wrestled with how to confront those same feelings, and instead of dealing with them in a healthy fashion, opted to do what so many in the West do: complain. But Zohra did it with an interlocutor, meaning she confessed her feelings and "blurted" them out. By blurting them out, Zohra exorcised the feeling but not the situation, and so failed to realize any sort of change in her life that was not superficial.

By letting go of Taieb, Farah encourages characters like her daughter to live lives that are true to their own autonomous selves. Over time this could change the family structure in Morocco, if practiced by enough families.[66] A woman who has the courage to live according to her own view of right and wrong could point to an ethics based on social harmony, social justice, and gender equality even in a world historically framed and governed by patriarchy.

[66] The novel's setting in Tetouan, a space that has long felt distanced from Rabat, and that has sought independence from the rest of the country, could make the text's symbolic geography quite influential. As an important city located far from the nation's capitol, it is ignored, but its political activity and nearness to Spain could make it a strategic place for creating spaces of agency for women. Writing on space, Henri Lefebvre has observed that "We know that the social whole has a cohesion, a coherence. The existing State is grounded upon these strong points. Men of the state busy themselves with sealing up the cracks by every means available to them. Once they are consolidated, nothing happens around these reinforced places. Between them are found zones of weakness or even lacunae. This is where things happen. Initiatives and social forces act on and intervene in these lacunae, occupying and transforming them into strong points or, on the contrary, into 'something other' than what has a stable existence" ("Theoretical Problems" 144). Tetouan could of course be one of those outlying zones that becomes, suddenly, a force for change, especially in the realm of gender relations.

Conclusion

To study global Hispanophone literatures is at once to realize that the angles and theoretical approaches can be taken in almost any direction that one wants. As the field begins to consolidate, especially in the relatively recent surge in Afro-Hispanic literary and cultural studies, it has coincided with Spain's recent economic collapse, a period that, starting in 2008, has continued to the present with the corruption in Spanish rule, spanning both of the main parties, the center-right PP (*Partido Popular*, or Popular Party) and the center-left PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, or Spanish Socialist Workers' Party). At the moment that this is being written, followers of the Spanish political scene will have observed the popular upsurge of two relatively new political parties, namely Ciudadanos and Podemos. The reason Spain's political system is diversifying into more political parties (that themselves have incredible social relevance in Spain today) is due to the fact that the Spanish people are fed up with corruption and they no longer are set 50-50 on the mainstream candidates from the traditional leaders that came after The Transition, the established PP and PSOE parties. A similar situation is happening in the U.S., where there seems to be, for the same reason, a surge in voting for the less-mainstream politicians.[67]

Spain is still reeling from a fragile economy where people around the world were losing their houses and their money, and where there have been several people in the business arena who have been making an incredible amount of money while the many suffer or rot in poverty. I am talking about the Bárcenas corruption scandal in Spain and

[67] I am referring to the incredible outpouring of support for Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump in the months immediately preceding the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

then the Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae related housing-crisis in the U.S. What happens is that normal, every-day citizens lose huge investments that go to the few who get rich off of these schemes. On both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, regular people with university studies and aspirations of having a career and families have now had to live in the street, move back in with their parents, or leave the country in search of a career. Their fall into a social state that was not expected has created impetus for the creation of a scapegoat, and the number one scapegoat in the United States and in Europe is one and the same: migrants. The biggest targets of this scapegoating are the African migrants. Be they from Sub-Saharan Africa or from the Maghreb, the most heavily discriminated against are those who come from a continent that was colonized and robbed of its natural resources by all the biggest powers in Europe – England, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In this dissertation I have focused on those regions in Africa that were colonized by Spain – arguably the smallest pieces of the colonial pie when everything was all divided up by the imperial powers.

Summing up, I conclude that Spain is not succeeding in trying to bury its past with Africa. It may be trying harder, and I think as we are well into the 21st century's second decade, where financial crisis has wrought Spain asunder, we can expect Spain's reception to African migrants to get even worse yet before it gets better. There is just too much of an established history in Spain of working-class (and even middle-class) white Spaniards getting worked up and upset at the mere suggestion of the threat that migrants will take their jobs away. At present this form of fear-mongering seems to be a major form of scoring points in the political realm. Astute citizens will recognize this

demagoguery when they see it, but it is common modern political discourse, especially on the political right, to blame migrants for the loss of jobs in a host country. It is happening in Spain now, as it is in many Western countries that are experimenting a high incoming migrant population. Given the situation with the *desahuciados* (the evicted tenants) and the *Democracia real YA!* movement in Spain, which was similar to the U.S.' *Occupy* movements, I think we can consider it highly likely that this racist treatment of migrants may well continue for the next few years. In light of this negative treatment and inhumane disposition towards others, as well as the general human tendency in the modern world to create a *chivo expiatorio* (someone to put the blame on, literally a sacrificial goat, or lamb), it would be necessary for Spanish citizens to understand that migrants are not taking their jobs, that this discourse is a lie used by politicians to rally points for themselves and to earn extra votes.

Yet despite these attempts to bury unwanted voices and unwanted subjectivities, the abject (in Kristeva's sense of the word)[68] always comes back to the surface, belying any effort to establish a pure, white and European Spanish identity. In her essay, Kristeva relates the abject to cadavers and dead bodies. This is particularly relevant to Spain's attitude to African migrants, especially with regard to the bodies that drown in the Mediterranean and remain behind, floating forlornly in the Mediterranean waters. Kristeva writes:

> […] corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life

[68] In this case, the "abject" is that which is violently repudiated by society because of its Freudian uncanniness --- being both familiar yet profoundly grotesque and disgusting at the same time.

> withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit-*cadere*, cadaver. (*Powers of Horror* 3)

Two things happen at once. (1) Real lives are being lost because Spain does not care about African migrant lives nor does it see them as lives worth grieving; (2) death is going beyond the simple discourse of bodies, to the burial of one's political voice. Because the burial of subjectivities does not mean just the burial of the body, but of a perspective, a culture, and of a living civilization, it cannot be killed off, and it cannot be silenced, nor intimidated into going away.

So while Spain will probably try ever harder to bury its African countenance from its history and from its demography by cracking down on migration, there will also be an equal push from its neighboring continent to come up. The harder Spain pushes down, the harder Africa will push up: one could perhaps frame it socially in terms of Isaac Newton's Third Law of Physics: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The attempt by Spain to bury unwanted histories and subjectivities will have the opposite effect, precisely because Africans do not have time any more to sit passively around in poverty, mind control, and dictatorships. Instead, they are moving, and they are moving with the will to create change.

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I wrote about this will to create change, except from a very personal space. In *El motín del silencio*, the protagonist Farah goes about effecting social change by focusing first and foremost on her own immediate nuclear family, especially for her daughter Zohra. She does not worry about saving the world, or about saving all of Morocco in Spain. She cares about one and one thing only- the events and people that she has control over: she wishes to control things only within her own personal sphere. This is the most effective way to create change, because it is an honest beginning from which anyone in the world can begin. It is what Gandhi referred to as "domestic *satyagraha.*"

By discussing Bouissef Rekab's work we shall now look at the others. I have started out of order, so let us see how burial has unfolded in the other works that have been analyzed in this study. In Chapter 1, I examined the role of Mignolo's idea of *border gnosis* in the context of Abderrahman El Fathi's poetics. In my discussion of El Fathi's work, I posit that El Fathi uses Lorquian imagery because Lorca himself represented Spain's own double consciousness, half European but half *not* European. Lorca embraced the Romani or *gitano* culture of Spain, which differs from the official narrative of Spain being tied, at least during Franco's dictatorship, to its Celtiberian roots, which were white and Germanic. In contrast, Lorca put emphasis on a non-European heritage that was pagan and not Christian, unlike the Visigoths. El Fathi uses Lorquian allusions in his poetics so as to un-bury and re-reveal the dual consciousness that Spain has historically had. Lorca embraced the Romani, as well as Arabic poetry, precisely

because these were cultural aspects of Spain that made it different from Europe.[69] By using Lorquian tropes in his poetics, El Fathi is able to contest the contemporary Spanish rhetoric on migration that Moroccan migrants and Spanish citizens have two cultures that cannot mesh with each other, as Spain's culture has never been rigidly definable. Instead, its cultural hybridity makes it a great space for receiving the arrival of African migrants.

In Chapter 2, I analyzed the degree to which Ahmed Daoudi, in his novel *El diablo de Yudis*, employs the trope of burial in order to counter Spanish ventriloquization of Moroccan subjectivity. By drawing on the theories of Cathy Caruth regarding trauma and on Kathleen Brogan's ideas on the former with burial, I establish that story-telling in Fez can become an impoverished Moroccan subject's strategy for burying a fragmented colonial identity, and instead assimilating a fuller identity that acknowledges coloniality for what it is, while simultaneously embracing one's own indigenous heritage. I argue that by burying this fragmented identity, one is able to assimilate a subjectivity that is then able to better decolonize itself of an outdated European mindset. The novel works on two different levels, as there is both a narrative (the life of the storyteller in Fez) and a metanarrative (the story he spins about U.N.-like troops invading a Moroccanesque territory). The fact that the stories begin to overlap coincides with the story's overarching purpose and message: that to be contrary to coloniality is not bad per sé, and that one must embrace one's inner dissident in order to truly overcome colonial trauma.

[69] See Miguel Ángel Vázquez' scholarship in which he explores the Arab roots of Lorca's famous "Romance sonámbulo" poem. In it, Vázquez explores the emotional and nostalgic meanings of home and abode both in the "Romance" and in Abu Tammam's 9th century poem "La anta anta wa-la al-diyaru diyaru." He claims that Lorca's famous verses "Pero yo ya no soy yo./Ni mi casa es ya mi casa" were inspired by the concept of abode, elegy, and exile in the Baghdad poet's panegyric.

In Chapter 3, I examined Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo's novel *El metro.* Falling back on the theory and research of Néstor García Canclini in *Hybrid Cultures* and Peter Geschiere in his *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, I explore how modernity *is* a form of witchcraft, especially in the former colonies in Africa (in this case Cameroon, which I read as a thinly-veiled cover for political events in neighboring Equatorial Guinea, the author's native soil). I investigate how the postcolonial government of Cameroon has been shaped by a colonial matrix. This being the case, the ruling elite of Cameroon feel they must develop the nation in such a way that it is masculine enough to run itself. Nonetheless this obsession with a masculine modernity has hurt the region enormously, and I set out to examine Ndongo's quiet feminist response to this hegemonic and problematic modernity that seems to have enveloped both the metropolis and its ex-satellite countries. By focusing on women and their responses to burial, I argue that Ndongo's text uses the imagery of burial to reveal new forms of modernity in which women actively have a voice, thus burying the patriarchal elements that keep their country in a more-or-less permanent state of being socially and politically backward.

Burial, then, can be understood from both a Spanish perspective and from an African perspective. In this study I have been looking at burial from a distinctly African perspective (a quasi pan-African one) and what I am seeing is that Africans will not be buried alive by this discourse in Spain that is attempting to block them out. Indeed, the only thing that Spain is revealing in its anti-immigrant rhetoric is that it is afraid, and afraid of change. If anyone is intimidated, it is not the people and citizens of the African postcolonial countries of Equatorial Guinea and Morocco. These people have already lost

too much: they have nothing left to lose, and everything to gain. Job prospects in their native locales are next to zero (although in Morocco there seems to be some flexibility, depending on one's connections, socioeconomic class and education level); censorship in Equatorial Guinea has all but quashed the opposition, so that very little political debate can even be had. As such, the migrants and their families back at home have nothing but the chance to win almost no matter what happens, even if the neoliberal economy is historically stacked against them. The very first step in fortifying one's place in the world is to want something different, and this seems to be the case in both Equatorial Guinea and Morocco. Certainly this would explain the high numbers risking their lives and their money to get into Fortress Europe. While in Tetouan, a young man asked me what job opportunities in the U.S. were like. I told him that the situation was difficult in the United States, because for some six years (2008-2014) the country had been in the midst of a major economic recession: he responded with words that humbled me and put me in my place: "Eso no es nada. En Marruecos *siempre* hay crisis." So long as Spain's ex-colonies remain in crisis, Spanish racism against Africans will likely increase. However, no matter what, Africans seeking a better life are going to continue heading north, cost what it may. This determination would be a good thing for both Spain and Africa. Spain would become more diverse, and Africans arriving in Spain would have access to jobs, healthcare, and the freedom of expression that they often do not have in their own countries.

What I have written may not solve all, or even any, of the complex problems that Spain and Africa face in their negotiations on migration. There are several other studies

that, while I was writing, I had thought could also be of fruitful exploration in the near future. For example, I noticed that all the authors that I wrote about are men. I think further studies could be done on the male-centric aspect of migration: that is, it is more often men who migrate than women. However, studies have found that often times, once women do migrate, and usually from lesser-developed countries to more-developed countries, they come to enjoy a higher social status than in their home countries. When men live with their wives in a foreign but more developed country they can often feel less "king of the house" than in their own native countries, where very often they had complete control of the household and its respective finances. For example, in a study on Vietnamese immigration, several migrant males told Nazli Kibria that "In Vietnam the man of the house is king. Below him the children, then the pets of the home, and then the women. Here, the woman is king and the man holds a position below the pets."

In another study, a Mexican female informant told scholars Guendelman and Pérez-Itriaga (1987) that "In California my husband was like a *mariposa.* Back here in Mexico he acts like a distant *macho*" (both studies qtd. by Patricia Pessar p. 27). In two of the chapters in this dissertation I have been able to study burial from a perspective that begins to open up a conversation on agency and gender. I am referring to the chapters on Ndongo's novel and then on Bouissef Rekab's *Silencio.* I think more issues could be explored, and certainly it would be incumbent to find Afro-Hispanic female writers who write about migration (I have found none to date). As Leela Gandhi has noticed, there is a dire gap between gender, feminist, and queer studies, on the one hand, and colonial and race studies on the other. This creates the illusion that the two have nothing in common,

and that the advances in one field preclude any kind of advance for the other, thus creating a polarization between the two. This is unfortunate and also misleading: Anne McClintock, in her study *Imperial Leather* (1995) was able to show the connection between gender, race, and coloniality. But she only investigated English-language texts. There remains much to be established by taking what Anne McClintock started and by adding a fourth theme to her famed study: migration. There are very few studies that have tried to bring together the thematics of gender, race, coloniality, and migration. Daniela Flesler has been making important inroads, and Susan Martin-Márquez has also made passing mentions to migration, but she has mainly focused on themes that are similar to McClintock's, with the exception that Martin-Márquez tackled the colonialism not of Brits in Africa, but of Spaniards in Africa.

It is also true that an unexpected experience of my examination of the novels included humor. I am quite releaved, and perhaps have recovered a little more of my own humanity, as I realized the subtle humor many of the authors incorporated in their works. It is important to point out that by humor I do not mean laughing at people and their misfortunes. Neither am I referring to laughing at the hard and tragic experiences of migrants in their crossings of air, land and sea. I am referring to the beautiful resilience of a people who find life to be enjoyable even after trauma has threatened to fully derail their lives. At the risk of offending some, I must confess that I sometimes even laughed while reading my texts. I suspect that there is a number of reasons as to why I laughed while reading the texts. Part of this could be due to my positionality: I am a white male, and as such a member of a privileged class, at least historically speaking. It is

contradictory and perhaps even problematic that I have chosen this theme: after all, what would I understand of these texts if I had no family connection to Africa? How could I be trusted to be faithful to my topic? Would I not imbue the theme with the coloniality of my whiteness, an identity which, being related to the race dynamics of capitalism, would unconsciously view African subjects as Other and therefore as inferior? It is, of course, a possibility. Perhaps this was why I laughed. *Había metido la pata* (I had gotten involved, and had "thrown my hat in the ring," as the colloquial English phrase goes). I had gone somewhere where I was not needed, could not understand the context, and where I did not speak the local languages nor have any familial connection. How could I understand the idioms, be they social, ethnic, or religious? Certainly the whole scenario was uncomfortable. Studying Africa, or at least regions of it, has its challenges. Maybe laughter was a way of uprooting my unconscious fear of the different. Maybe it was a way to react to something that made me deeply uncomfortable. Or maybe laughter was the fruit of avoiding confrontation with the idea that death is our universal destination. Burial is not an easy topic. It means talking about violence, trauma, and the end of existence – certainly no laughing matter. Yet to bury uncomfortable feelings, the very theme of this dissertation, naturally will invoke laughter in someone. I would argue that laughter and death haunts us all. To write about death, burial, violence, and trauma means that the investigator will be talking about suffering. Nonetheless, I objectively think that there was some intended humor in some of the texts, and I would openly acknowledge that I could be mistaken. For example, I could certainly see some possible humor in Ahmed Daoudi's, as well as in Ndongo's text, regarding burial. If I may also be so bold, I

even laughed out loud at some of the scenes in Daoudi's text – parts of it were ingengiously hilarious. Hoping I will not be taken to a psychiatric ward, I would certainly say that one area that could benefit from serious (?) study would be the use of humor in the death and burial scenes of Afro-Hispanic novelists. But the field of postcolonial study in Spanish is full of possibilities, and in the case of peripheral global Hispanophone literatures, such as with Morocco, Equatorial Guinea, and the Philippines, the possibilities are even greater yet, because so little has been explored so far. The study of Hispanophone African literatures is only just now gathering momentum, and as such it is the right time to begin looking into potential studies that relate movement between Africa and Spain.

Another area of neglect in the study of Afro-Hispanic literature is the Sephardic influence in North Africa. In many northern Moroccan towns, such as Tetouan and Chefchauen, there are, within the *medinas*, or old city walls, Jewish neighborhoods that are known as *mellahs* (*mellah* in the singular). They are historic testimony to the Judeo-Spanish presence in the Maghreb. Some important books and studies have come out regarding this reality, in particular the novel *En las puertas de Tánger* (2008), by Mois Benarroch. The novel explores the social tensions among the Jewish diaspora, specifically between the Ashkenazi and the Sepharad, in both Europe and North Africa. It is about a Sepharad family in Tetouan, yet the novel takes us to different world cities. Another text that has recently come out is Tabea Linhard's *Jewish Spain: A Mediterranean Memory* (2014). Linhard dedicates one particular chapter, "History's Patio: Spanish Colonialism in Morocco and the Jewish Community," to the Moroccan

Jewish subjectivities inhabiting the North African country. Given that 99% of Morocco's current population identifies as Muslim, these studies into what goes on in minority populations are of absolute importance. However, we should not forget that Islam is itself not a monolith, and that people live and experience Islam in as many different ways as there are Muslims. Diversity does not *only* come in the form of other belief systems, but also comes from within the Umma, or Islamic community. It is precisely because of diversity, in the form of religion, creedence, and attitude toward life in general, that migration to Spain will not stop, and should not stop.

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